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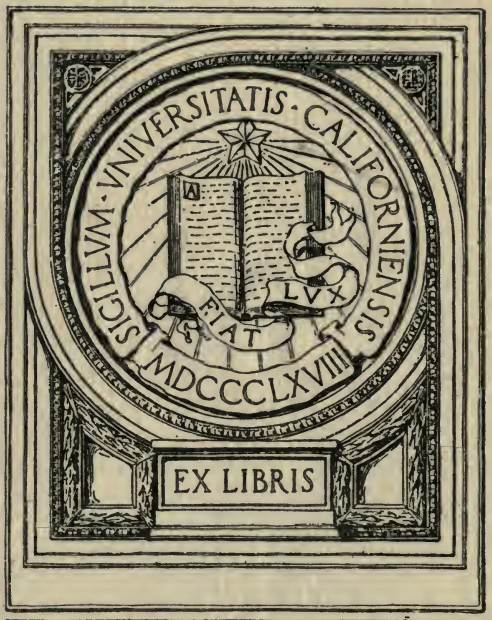

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"*The thing before men was a human life, entirely native, and unflinchingly complete. Its conditions were those of human simplicity, unadorned and undisguised. And yet it was undeniable that in the texture of human history a new thing had appeared. Perfect stainlessness, perfect sureness of spiritual intuition, and as it seemed of communion with the Unseen, a tone of unique and unfaltering authority, contributed elements in an impression which included, and was greater than, them all.*

* * * * * *

"*We who look back from such a distance, who have seen so much crumble and alter, who belong to a generation which has changed everything, and which feels itself on the brink of further change, who have seen the outer form and fabric of the religion in which this living truth found body cracked, and shaking, and disfigured, and as it may seem to many awaiting by destruction the end of its decay—we still find that one Name is honoured above every name.*

* * * * * *

"*Do we ask what explains this wonderful thing, what secret is at the heart of all this? Ah! there we are upon the very threshold of the inner Sanctuary, and it is not for me to-day to enter there. Only we may put to ourselves the question whether it may not be that that old kinship between man and the Being, high and holy, who in Nature is part revealed and part concealed, that kinship which is the secret of man's power to interpret Nature, which makes all his best moral effort seem to him to be but a response and an imitation—whether it may not be that that kinship has found at length some new and full completion, a unity final, and yet infinitely germinal.*"—"The Fulness of Christ," E. S. Talbot, Bishop of Winchester.

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TO

MY BROTHERS

WHO LIVE THE LIFE OF WHICH

I SPEAK

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I WOULD offer my thanks to a friend who, although absorbed in important philosophic work, was generous enough to read the greater part of this book in manuscript and by his suggestions to give me valuable help; also to others who have kindly considered the proof sheets.

SYNOPSIS OF VOLUNTAS DEI

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION 1

There are three common hypotheses of the origin of our universe. These three set forth by analogies and examined—

1. The Materialistic hypothesis—that all things mechanically evolve, and are mere combinations of matter.
2. The Psychic hypothesis—that spirit, potential in matter, has been the formative principle and will become more and more dominant.
3. The God hypothesis.

The strong and weak points of each hypothesis considered.

If all three were equally reasonable, the fact that the third satisfies feeling and activity as well as reason is likely to make it always the belief of the greater part of mankind; but there is no moral defect involved in the acceptance of any of these theories by men who honestly find their natures satisfied by them. The theist must whole-heartedly allow that an honest man's intelligent adherence to what seems to him truth cannot be offensive to God; while materialist or psychist must not accuse theist of lack of candour for adhering to the God hypothesis even though his reason may not be wholly satisfied; for it is probably quite as candid to adhere to what satisfies volitional and emotional nature, although reason be not wholly convinced, as to reject a satisfying belief merely because no reasonable proof can be offered.

The fact of the diverse and unnumbered multitude living in what they believe to be consciousness of God is considered as weighing down the scale on the side of the God hypothesis.

CHAPTER I

QUALITIES OF PURPOSE 19

Belief in creative Intelligence involves belief in creative purpose. The conditions under which we seek truth require us to make

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the facts we know the basis of inference as to the nature of God's purpose.

The qualities of purpose considered in concrete life.

1. Purpose exercised between precise forecast and exact fulfilment. This only possible for the mere mechanic working in inanimate matter.
2. Inventor or artist works out new ideal in inanimate matter. Forecast less precise; result less accurate.
3. Gardeners and herdsmen work out inward ideals in the material of life. These desire only the perfection of the life they tend, without forecasting individual variation.
4. The schoolmaster, parent, or missionary works out inward ideals in a higher form of life. The higher the material in which the purpose must be worked out, the stronger and nobler must be the purpose.

This is the law of purpose; and we may infer from it that God executes His purpose in the sphere of autonomous life, that the divine Will is not a force that works mechanically between precise forecast and exact fulfilment.

CHAPTER II

CREATIVE PURPOSE 31

When increasing knowledge shatters the traditional pictures of the unknown, it is better to build these up again rather than seek to live by a faith unaided by imagination, always bearing in mind that all words and images are merely symbols of truth.

Assuming God as first cause, we must try to picture His relation to creation.

Metaphysical difficulties notwithstanding, we postulate Creator and creation, and must paint the unknown in analogies from the life we know.

Matter, whether organic or inorganic, is now described in a way that to the plain man implies that it is only a form of energy. Energy may be thought of as the body of life. Let us picture how this creation can have come to be.

We may conceive of creation as the gift of life.

Autonomy is of the essence of life; for since we insist that man is self-directing, spite of scientific evidence that he is determined, we need not suppose all other things entirely different from him in this respect.

In the beginning we get motion, tension, attraction, repulsion, and by degrees what we call the "inanimate" universe—God exercising in this stage something analogous to mechanical purpose.

When life begins to express itself in organic forms, autonomy becomes more decided; God's purpose works more intricately.

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Along the line of intelligent life we get greater and greater autonomy, which at last calls for what we know as the highest form of purpose—that of the parent or teacher.

Pantheistic thought identifies the life of the universe with God; but life lends itself both to good and evil, to progress and retrogression. It appears saner to regard life as the not-God, which came from God, and is being trained by Him to form with Himself a new unity.

It is never life that is limited, but the power of the organism to utilise life for its own ends. The perfection of the organism would be its power to utilise life fully for its highest end.

When life at last in man becomes conscious of itself, and able consciously to respond to God, we get "spiritual life," which entails pre-eminently the power to utilise more and more of the universal life for the highest end.

The speculations of this chapter seem to harmonise with experience.

CHAPTER III

PROVIDENCE AND AUTONOMY 43

Can we detect in world evolution a purpose which tallies with the types of purpose we have found in man?

The order we perceive in inorganic nature tallies with such human purpose as we have called mechanical.

In the earliest stage of life physical strength and adaptation seem to be the aim.

Later on the aim seems to be a balance of physical force and intelligence; not the strongest body, nor the strongest intelligence, but the best combination of these persists. We therefore get defects in the physical nature and in intelligence handed down along the line of fullest life.

Later, when what we call God consciousness or spiritual life is added, nature again strives for a balance of the three qualities; again defects in each aspect are handed down along the line of fullest life.

The purpose suggested by the development of human life is health of body and brain, excellence of intelligence, excellence of will power, excellence of extra-regarding impulses which make for the perfection of corporate life. The prevailing desire of nature seems to be to rid itself of defects in all these.

The disease germ or parasite does not belong to the method, but militates against the purpose.

If this tendency to excellence of life indicates God's will, very much must happen in our universe which merely represents the will of the autonomous creature before it is won by the persuasive purpose of God.

If disease and defect were the will of God, God and the life-force would be at war.

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But on what grounds do we claim that all that happens—including disease and defect—is "providential"?

Going back to what in man we saw to be the highest sort of purpose, we find that the teaching and training of autonomous life cannot mean the ordering of all its joys and sorrows.

We therefore assume that the supreme purpose of the universe may only be accomplished when the creature co-operates with the life-force, *i.e.* with God.

Bearing of this on the doctrine of prayer.

CHAPTER IV

THE PURPOSE IN HUMANITY 53

Since God gave autonomy to His creation, He must have power to realise His purpose by that method.

As "faithful Creator" He must be related to His creation—(1) by accepting the struggle between right and wrong as His own, (2) by thus ensuring a compensating gain to creation for all the suffering entailed by freedom.

We have found that in organic nature the stream of life discards disease and defect and failure in intelligence, in temperance and courage, in affection for offspring and co-operation with fellows.

In human affairs progress is more complex. Conscience, or satisfaction in virtue, seems to belong to the fullest force of human life. Life—sound, abundant, beautiful—does not flow along the generations of those who break through customs to gratify passion: it flows along the generations of the law-abiding, but also of those who disregard present law in the effort to mould and obey the higher law of the future.

The push of conscience must be seen not only in the will, but in the understanding.

Along this line we get the growth of the hope in social progress or personal immortality, or both.

This is exemplified in the history of the human race. Nations with a religion of pessimism and fear show powers of accurate observation and vivid imagination; but advance in political justice and social amelioration are only found with those who hope in the future.

This hope develops intellect. Thus, intellectual as well as moral force is found necessary to fulness of life. A hopeful intellectual life makes for universal fellowship. Monopolies always yield to the advance of a fuller life.

Perfection of conscious life is to be manifested in physical health and beauty, mental genius and social love.

But the individual dies imperfect.

The perfect fulfilment of every individual life seems involved in any purpose of the universe worthy to be called divine.

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As death and desuetude of ideas attach to any divine purpose we can detect here, we are driven to produce the line of hope beyond this world, towards a synthesis of individual and racial immortality.

CHAPTER V

EMERGENCE OF RELIGIOUS LIFE 65

As the senses emerge in biological evolution, the psychic qualities connected with them also evolve. By the same process we see man's consciousness of God evolve within his self-consciousness.

Animal sympathy produces altruism—*e.g.* mother and young; dog and master. In the same way human sympathy with God produces susceptibility to divine influence.

God-consciousness described in Holy Writ in terms of physical consciousness.

No line can be drawn between man's psychic and spiritual powers.

CHAPTER VI

UNION OF GOD WITH CREATION 77

As the line of tendency in evolution passes through intelligence to consciousness of God and the immortal hope, it points to a destiny that is union with God.

Eternal truth can only be apprehended by a variety of analogies.

The idea of union thus considered: Plant and seedling. Animal and offspring. In the union of herd, hive, flock, unity of purpose is added to unity of kind. Greater difference goes with closer union, as in unity of marriage; unity of understanding.

Difference, personality, self-hood, are necessary to a high degree of unity. We have no conception of real unity that does not depend on difference.

Four sorts of unity—of kind, of purpose, of feeling, of interpretation. All these exemplified in the brief hour of family life.

But man seeks an abiding union on these lines. Hence—

1. Ancestor worship—identifying kindred with God.
2. Tribal gods—deifying the corporate purpose.
3. Mystery religions, involving unity of feeling — deifying the intuitions of the race.
4. Philosophies, involving unity of interpretation—deifying intellectual conceptions.

The religion which can satisfy humanity must offer all these sorts of unity in one, and the unity must be between different persons —man and God.

It is this to which nature unconsciously tends. It is this which man consciously seeks. It is in this search that God meets man bestowing re-creative love.

CHAPTER VII

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NEWNESS OF LIFE 89

Susceptibility to God's influence develops with the growing God-consciousness.
Illustration—the sea breaking into a new inlet.
Communion of God and man may be described as "telepathic."
Union of man with God does not mean identity. True union depends on community of kind and difference of identity.
We rarely see anything perfect after its kind. Degree of perfection in plants or animals depends on environment. Whatever the general level reached by a class or species, it will respond to an improved environment.
So with the human race. Hence the function of the most God-conscious man must be to better the social environment of his fellows.
To describe this function in another way: the highest human work is creative; and the highest material for this work is conscious autonomous life, and the highest product is a new humanity. The greatest men will, therefore, always be working to create new men and a new human environment.
Thus the greatest men have been founders of world religions which, in proportion to their greatness, transcend local and national barriers.
But while any society is still imperfect, human excellence, which must be God's intention, cannot be perfectly realised in it.
The highest development possible to the individual in an imperfect environment can only be perfection of volition.
When this is attained by the founder of a religion the result must be a society that will transcend all human distinctions.

CHAPTER VIII

SON OF MAN 99

Man everywhere has the inward conviction that he could do right but does not.
On the basis of this conviction all law and justice rest.
It would seem natural that this sense of ability to do right should find realisation.
The man who attained to perfect volition would be the true Son of the race.
If rightness of will involves compassion manward, such an one must sympathise with the shortcoming of his race.
Such rightness of will involves "singleness of eye," which is the way of divine illumination.

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Illumination—foresight and insight—are to be had by holding the activities steadily directed to the right.

To this end God gives the universe autonomy, but exercises over it fostering care.

Think of the fostering care of a parent, guardian, lover. Such care can only impart illumination when its object sympathises with its aims.

So Creative Intelligence watches over creation, ever ready to give light to each ready recipient.

As in biological evolution we see physical senses coming to different degrees of perfection, so in human history character evolves. Light is always imparted to the individual as he is able to grasp it.

God will first have full effect on human life when undeviating adherence to right is produced in the human will.

The Incarnation.

Goodness realised reveals lack of goodness in all else. Thus we get the proclamation of the reign of God in contrast to the current world.

CHAPTER IX

SON OF GOD 107

The universal conviction that man can do right but does not, makes it reasonable to expect that a man should some time appear who does right.

But goodness cannot be achieved by individual effort alone; it must be also the gift of destiny, *i.e.* predestination.

Individual man, personal though he be, is indivisible from the stream of life.

Man is thus born into a scheme of things which, if free-will and the sense of sin be realities, as we believe, is not perfectly adjusted to God's will. While it is probable that what works against God's will is self-destructive, which limits possible extent of discord, such discord, when personal, may be the diabolic element which, as well as the divine, environs the spirit of man.

It is certain that every child chooses between ideals determined by forces other than itself.

Every individual is partly made, and wholly environed, by forces other than himself.

This undoubted truth underlay the ancient stories of the divine or regal descent of every great man.

In the Hebrew poem of creation all life originates from the brooding of the Spirit; and Hebrew prophets looked forward to the perfecting of human polity as an act of God, cosmology and eschatology thus alike figuring forth the truth that all that is good is of God.

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Again, if we take the "fruits of the Spirit" and their opposite as described by St. Paul, we see that only in a community or family where the fruits exist and their opposites are absent, can the best sort of child be born.

Whether, then, the doctrine of the divine Fatherhood of Jesus be fact, or only a poetic representation of fact, the idea it symbolises is still true.

If the Incarnation was the culmination of the world-process, it could only be the beginning of a saving life; further, that life, if truly human, must go on to develop in the heavens. For true humanity implies much more than a body in human shape inhabited by Divinity; it involves a personal immortality.

This asserted in the Pauline doctrine of the resurrection and mediation of Christ.

The Church now admits she has mistaken crisis for process in her doctrine of the first, and also of the last, things. The Church may also have mistaken crisis for process in her account of the Advent of Christ.

But he who sees truth and mistakes its form lives more wisely than he who fails entirely to see it.

Sun, photosphere, and sunbeam suggested as an analogy for the doctrine of the Trinity.

CHAPTER X

OMNIPOTENCE 123

The simplest idea of omnipotence is analogous to the power of an adult over a child.

This power may be analysed into three sorts in an ascending scale—

1. Power to change the place of matter, *i.e.* to move the child's body.
2. Power to influence the child's behaviour.
3. Power to conceive of the effect desired.

The effect desired may be (*a*) mere acquiescence; or (*b*) intelligent acquiescence; or (*c*) a good balance of spontaneity and acquiescence.

Power may also be reckoned quantitatively. The power that lasts longest and extends over the greatest range is the greatest degree of power.

Government by force can belong only to the infancy of the child or of the race.

A clear conception of a strong character to be moulded, and self-restraint in the process of evoking it, mark the highest degree of power in the adult over a child.

If to this were added the power to create the child, we should get the complete notion of creative and administrative power which we associate with Omnipotence.

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To get our simplest conception of creation let us imagine a gardener creating a rose. He must exhibit, first, power to conceive the rose character. His conception must extend to all possible varieties of the rose life.

At the same time, to form the conception is to set its limits.

These limits are twofold—the outward and visible possibilities, and the character of the inner secret life.

If we attribute to such a life any power of self-direction, it follows that the creator-gardener cannot know which possibility will develop and which will fail. His power, after creation, will be of the same nature as that of the adult over the child.

In both cases higher power is strictly regulated in relation to inferior power, its secret being the ability to conceive an end and regulate action toward that end.

Hence this must be our conception of Omnipotence.

The creation of the finite must therefore involve the self-regulation of the Infinite.

If so, how can we assume we understand the degree of self-limitation?

If the end Omnipotence has in view is a form of created life able to freely co-operate with Him, that would seem to involve limiting Himself so far as to give the ability to resist Him.

This resistance in lower nature would mean disease and degeneration; in higher nature, these together with moral disease and moral degeneration.

But it is only the possibility of resistance, not resistance itself, that can be said to be necessary.

We cannot conceive of Omnipotence as able to have all things that seem to us good. Foreknowledge appears to us good, but the supreme good appears to us to be the hope of something better than we have ever experienced.

We cannot conceive God as both having all things at once and as having this supreme joy of expectation. We should remember this when inclined to dogmatise as to what Omnipotence must or must not include.

It appears, however, to require a greater degree of power to create a living existence whose successive attainments would be an ever-varying and glad surprise to the Creative Mind than to create a passive thing whose career would be from the beginning static to the Creative Mind.

The Christian will here remember that our Lord represented God as a Father, and thus gave His authority to the idea that God's happiness is concerned in the choices that men make.

The responsibility felt by the best parents for the careers of their children is something that perhaps comes as near to touching the great Reality as anything we know.

If so, God's prescience must extend to all possibilities of disaster, and against the results of all possible disaster He must provide.

God's re-creating influence on His creatures must be unceasing though not coercive.

CHAPTER XI

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THE DIVINE-HUMAN REVELATION 139

The facts of the universe are a parable from which we must abstract a meaning.

But only that interpretation which has been thoroughly assimilated can be perfectly articulate. When articulate it is a less perfect interpretation than that to which the mind is already advancing.

We dimly see in the creative process the Source of life, the developing life, and the relation of potential unity between them.

The nature of the Source is indicated by the quality of the development—energy into life, life into self-hood.

Illegitimate anthropomorphism perhaps consists in assuming that what we know as self-hood reveals the absolute nature of the Source.

It is because the Incarnation indicates vital union with the Source notwithstanding our ignorance, that it is of such vast importance.

What should we expect the revelation to be that came to and through one whose human will was perfectly united to the Divine will?

1. That he would reveal more truly the nature of God in His relation to creation—God as the supreme lover of humanity, the supreme sufferer with humanity, and the supreme attraction of humanity.
2. That he would reveal more truly the results of the divine influence on the world, laying emphasis on the repairing of disaster, "binding up that which is broken," "healing that which is sick."

This activity of the Creator, when applied to free, self-conscious mind, produces the higher social development of the individual by means of a higher psychic environment. The highest and most universal of human societies are the great religions; hence we should expect the Christ to found a great religion.

The religion founded by the ideal man will bring into man's way of seeing life that order and proportion which best enables him to co-operate with the Creator in lifting up the human race and all creation to conformity with the Divine desire.

We should expect that order to set first the universal weal; next, the racial weal; and, lastly, the individual weal. In the next chapters we shall consider the attitude of Christianity to these three ends, taking them in the order in which practically men have to face them.

CHAPTER XII

INDIVIDUAL WEAL 151

The sense of individual imperfection is a pledge of progress and of ultimate perfection.

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Only as regards moral imperfection does man feel he could have done better, while history emphasises the attainment of moral perfection in one instance.

A perfect environment is necessary for a perfect life, but life determines its own environment.

The one morally perfect man proclaimed a new environment.

The necessity for interaction of perfect outer conditions and perfect inner life in order to perfection is also seen in animal and plant life.

Processes of selection and growth are never instantaneous.

So if perfect environment came to-morrow all men or some men must be ready to manifest a corresponding perfection of inner life if the perfect condition is to be permanent.

All students of the Gospels admit that Jesus proclaimed the coming of a perfect environment—the Kingdom of God, and also proclaimed the life of the Kingdom already present in the hearts of some men, and gave the signs by which it could be known.

In view of one divine purpose through all things, we shall look for correspondence of those signs described by Jesus with the characteristics of fullest life in evolutionary development.

Main distinctions between inorganic and organic life :

1. Organic life adapts itself to its conditions. Gentleness is of the essence not only of vegetable life but of animal life. The violence even of beasts of prey is incidental ; without gentleness and self-sacrifice they would perish.
2. Organic life works through age-long process to new forms ; the changes of inorganic life mark little progress. Illustrations : sand and cacti, etc.
   This power of initiation, characteristic of all organic life, must mark fitness for the Kingdom.
3. Organic life has capacity for greater difference, and also closer union, than inorganic. These characteristics are intensest in men, in whom the profoundest difference is marked by personality, and the closest union becomes brotherhood.

Human brotherhood is shown (*a*) in services to others rendered incidentally in furthering one's own ends (not a distinctively human function), and (*b*) in services consciously rendered to the collective good at the sacrifice of private good. This is distinctively human, and must characterise the ideal man and the ideal society.

Man must have this perfect social temper before he is fit for the perfect earthly environment.

These characteristics will be found to conform to the ethic of the Beatitudes.

Further, the close union of man with man must be completed by the sense of union with God and response to the divine appeal for sympathy.

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Thus, if one could believe the perfection of life conditions could come about catastrophically to-morrow, it would be necessary to believe men in existence to-day who possessed the characteristics approved in the whole teachings of the Gospels. Before that perfection come about, and after, these characteristics must increasingly obtain.

Individual weal must consist in the exercise of these characteristics, and they are identical with those Jesus preached as necessary to participation in "the Kingdom."

CHAPTER XIII

WEAL OF SPECIES OR RACE 167

Perfection of the individual in isolation does not satisfy us, for if all things fulfil one purpose, variety must end in vital unity and individual perfection of the universe. As a stage toward this is involved the perfection of the race.

The individual, both in this life and the next, must be in relation with the life of the whole, for out of all relation he would cease to exist.

Analogy to the constitution of the physical universe, any member of which, if it could get outside the range of gravitation, etc., would, so far as we know, cease to exist as an individual.

Attraction of man for man is analogous to the attraction of physical particle for particle.

The self that would isolate itself from the influence of all other selves is more liable to disintegrate than the self that is governed entirely by the spirit of age or class.

God's purpose for humanity on earth and beyond being one purpose, the unity of the race on earth must be perpetuated beyond death, human beings always, everywhere, co-operating with God to accomplish His purpose, or, possibly, defying that purpose to their own spiritual disintegration.

CHAPTER XIV

UNIVERSAL WEAL 175

The universal weal is the weal of God.

We can only think of God positively in relation to our universe, as the source of its energy, the architect of its progress, the sharer of its suffering, the ruler of its perfected condition, revealed through a human life perfectly at one with Himself, as the sun is revealed through its photosphere.

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The goal of God must be also the goal of man. With God he must co-operate, first to attune his mind and will to God's, and then to lift humanity and all creation to perfection.

How can we conceive that universal perfection?

The universe being the outcome of one purpose, we conceive all its parts and their perfection as inter-dependent.

Similarly, confining ourselves to our own world and all it contains, we must realise that the most insignificant plant or animal, though it may not directly serve humanity, must subserve the all-embracing purpose of God in some way.

For if God could disregard his lower creations when man came forth, He could disregard man if in some other world a higher race were evolved.

Hence humanity can only feel assured of salvation because of the faith that God wills the salvation of the whole.

Thus the argument for man's salvation founded on the idea of the earth as the centre of the universe, and man as its supreme product, must give way to an argument consonant with the idea of the relative insignificance of our earth in the universe, and of man's life upon it. That argument must be the universality of God's purpose as embracing the least of His creatures, and a consummation of that purpose which we do not see on earth, in which every class of life must have its part, for if any part of the universe can be godless, the whole may be.

Our Lord taught emphatically that nothing lives or dies without God.

The universality of the Divine purpose will only overwhelm and confuse our thought unless, with Jesus Christ, we centre attention on its fatherliness, involving as it does a consummation that will fulfil the promise of all things.

Such vision of God's end, though we can only see it in blurred outline, can help us to the rejecting of paltry ideas of God's Church and His heaven, and to some hint of reconciliation between the world-affirming and the world-negating spirit.

The universal perfection, in which consists the weal of God, must always be the goal of the extra-regarding purpose of corporate humanity.

CHAPTER XV

WORLD AFFIRMATION 189

Those beliefs which account to a man for existence are his real creed. When any faith ceases to do this for men it ceases to be a living religion.

A religion may be genuinely adhered to which is not a key to existence, but it is a dying religion.

The Pharisaic religion in the time of Christ is an instance.

The permanent element in religion is the effort of each age to reconcile religious feeling and knowledge.

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The central Christian doctrines must be felt to offer the most fundamental explanation of the facts of existence as we know them to-day if Christianity is to continue a vital religion and not become a mere mythology.

The conception of the work of Christ developed in the early Church as the possession of new facts required it.

The fact that Christian faith has always been able to assimilate new knowledge, and re-read the Christian revelation in its light, suggests that Christianity originates in an external Power, not in man.

There is no stopping-place in this process of development as facts call for a more fundamental explanation.

The discovery in our times of the relative insignificance of our world in the astronomical universe demands a deeper interpretation of the meaning of Christ's earthly life and death.

Consider how the conception of the union of the divine and the human natures in Christ is affected by modern conceptions of Divinity and humanity.

No longer able to suppose God concentrates care on this little earth, we cannot suppose we know as much of what there is to know about Him as before. Our case is like that of a child in the nursery when he begins to find out that his father, though devoted to his interests, has wider interests of which a child can know nothing.

Again, humanity being but an incident in world evolution, and God being involved in all material creation, the older conception of the human spirit as wholly independent after death of the physical universe and of other grades of life, is not tenable. Rather, co-operation with God in a future life would seem to consist in doing what we see He has always been doing for creation, and fitness for that must be attained here in the effort to re-create earth.

In the light of these new conceptions of Divinity and humanity the Incarnation must manifest the relation of God not merely to men but to the whole living creation, of which man is but a part.

We conceive the Atonement of Christ as manifesting God as working and suffering to bring man with His whole living creation into free obedience to His will, until it fully express the character He first conceived for it.

If man knows by experience that God in Christ thus deals with him, then we have reason to think the larger creation of which man is so intimate a part will also, by the patient love and suffering of God, ultimately be conformed perfectly to His will.

The difficulty considered of holding that man's spirit is a special and more direct creation of God, and that therefore the revelation through Christ bears only on man's spiritual nature.

The modern philanthropic spirit can only be justified to the Christian by seeing in it an attempt to work as God works to redeem the whole terrestrial creation.

CHAPTER XVI

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CHRISTIAN POWER 207

The "will to power" is divine, and is essential to humanity.
Jesus proclaimed the way of Divine meekness as the only way to attain true power.
The scientist has discovered the method of meek obedience to be the only way to power over nature; and the Gospel says the same method in social life must bring about the reign of God.
Only by using the divine method can men share the divine joy of real power, of permanent conquest.
In their absolute refusal to see in current world-powers the Kingdom of God the early Christians converted half the world.
Love, and the service of love, have always been the culmination of the mystic vision, but the inconsistent belief that evil has to be first overthrown by Divine violence has caused Christians in practice to modify the ethic of Jesus, while the Kingdom tarries.
The Christians of the first century looked for the speedy coming of the new order by the direct power of God.
Later the Church learned that human co-operation with God was needed, but in learning it lost sight of the main characteristic of her power and resorted to violence.
The Crusades illustrate this.
The contradictory ideals thus involved were to be realised, the one as a universal Church on earth, to be fought for; the other as a perfect state in heaven, to be gained by the Christian temper.
Through long experience Christians are coming to see the fighting spirit must be dropped and the meekness of Jesus must conquer the world.
The practical problem is how to live in present conditions so as to bring in the perfect state.
Parallel between the missionary in a non-Christian land and the early Christians. Their common methods and common success suggest a way of solving our problem.
Each generation must be ready to cast off elements of the current world as it comes to recognise them as inconsistent with the Christian spirit.
The Christian attitude towards such questions as the use of the military to keep order in a railway strike.
The mysterious power of the method of Jesus is evident to-day in the few who consistently adhere to that method.

CHAPTER XVII

CHRISTIAN ENTERPRISE 223

The life Jesus came to give was a positive, energising force; and the Church would have better represented her Lord had she emphasised positive rather than negative commandments.

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For the abounding life of God received by a man is ample to produce full positive activity of all his powers.
The attitude and teaching of the Church on the question of marriage is an illustration of this mistake.
We judge all healthy life, not according to the sins omitted, but according to the positive goodness and enterprise manifested, and our highest praise for such enterprise is that it has originality.
Christianity, if better than other religions, must differ from them in giving greater stimulus to positive good of all sorts and to the encouragement of enterprise and originality in the work of moulding men to higher purposes.
The older view was that God revealed exact instructions as to the work He wanted done (as Moses received the pattern of the Tabernacle in the mount), but we have discovered that God does not thus use mechanical purpose toward humanity. Jesus gave His disciples principles of action and the stimulus of a new life, and left the method of applying principles to their own genius, enriched by the mystic vision.
We only remain commonplace in our piety and stereotyped in our methods because, from fear of a hard God, we wrap our religious genius in a napkin, content to remain without the multiplied product of spiritual enterprise, not realising that God is guarantor for all positive effort, however great its apparent failure.
The early Church learned from its Lord that the force of God was bringing to them the Kingdom; hence the responsibility for it was not on them, and they were free to fit men for its coming.
If to-day the responsibility for bringing in the Kingdom is man's, Jesus has misled His Church. We may have misunderstood time and method, but the teaching of Jesus is plain—that God in Christ comes to mankind, not that mankind has to travel painfully to find God. That is our sufficient warrant for ceaseless enterprise in the effort to fit men to abide in that day.
All that makes for fulness of life is preparation for the Kingdom. The marvellous works ascribed to Jesus are an epitome of the activities the world-soul feels essential to salvation; and God being a faithful Creator, we must believe that what He teaches the world-soul to aspire to is its proper goal.
Then, what Jesus was and did is a promise for the future condition and power of mankind; and just in so far as men work as He did to fit men's bodies and minds for the coming Kingdom, so far may they count on being inspired and inwrought by God.

CHAPTER XVIII

CHRISTIAN UNITY 239

We assume in the universe a unity of purpose.
Hence we assume that things and persons sharing a common nature have a community of origin and destiny.

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Analysis of the nature of the unity possible to persons.

Illustrated in the low form of unity possible to devils—*i.e.* the unconscious and involuntary unity of centres of a common life, which all receive and emit similar impulses. The devil, being degenerate, tends to greater sameness with his fellows and to incapacity for conscious union.

All Christians necessarily have the lower degree of involuntary and unconscious union with each other, for they receive and transmit similar impulses; but the higher degree of union, conscious and voluntary, with some outward organisation, is necessary for efficiency.

The Christian life tends to ever greater variety and ever closer union.

Christendom has always recognised need of union.

Three epochs in history of Christendom—

(*a*) That of embryonic and unrecognised divergence.

(*b*) That of the use of constraint to suppress divergence.

(*c*) That of recognised divergence and lack of voluntary union.

The achievement of voluntary union with adequate scope for variety still lies before the Church.

"The things of God" thus demanding the greatest distinction and closest union in men, we may find an explanation of Christian disunion in our mistaken conception of "the things of God" for which religious parties fight.

Looking impartially, we can usually see that in such controversy God is on both sides, while He can only identify himself fully with that divine ideal of right embodied in the life of Jesus and with the coming Kingdom which is its fulfilment.

In so far as we can discover and practise the righteousness that belongs to that Kingdom we shall realise the real unity in diversity of all faithful men.

Misinterpreting "the things of God," we have missed the significance of the Cross, not seeing that to suffer with the world has always been the glory of God.

A religion and civilisation concentrated on the defence of a good already attained were bound to be opposed to a forward-looking Christ.

Peter, wishing earthly power and honour for his Lord, was in effect desiring to see Him take sides in the current clash of right and wrong.

Jesus stood for the faith that the taint of evil was over all the current world, that hope lay in the coming of the perfect reign of God. In compelling His crucifixion He attested this faith by His death.

We are therefore bound to believe that God sides with an ideal righteousness just beyond our sight, which all men alike fail to reach, whence the folly of judgment and condemnation among men is evident; we see also that God shows Himself in Jesus as abiding most with those who suffer most under His own gift of freedom, those who are condemned and outcast by a world itself condemned by God but not cast out from God.

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The outlook on the Kingdom implies that no reverse can come to any institution except from its own inward evil. It follows that it is useless to fight against a menacing force; internal reform is the only safeguard.

Further, if we realise that God suffers with those whom we condemn or ostracise or punish, we must, at the expense of our own rights and dignity, find some other way of winning them.

CHAPTER XIX

PAIN AND PUNISHMENT 255

Assuming a psychic life, latent or developed, in all organic things, capacity for suffering exists only with the development of consciousness, and is proportioned to the degree in which consciousness is developed.

Possibility of physical failure we share with animals and plants; moral and mental failure belong to intelligent life alone.

A failing organism may transmit life, but that life will be in some degree degenerate.

Thus, individual life can proceed to higher and higher forms, or it may diverge and deteriorate—a process fraught with pain.

Such pain is clearly a danger signal. It cannot be regarded as punishment, because it always falls heavily on the innocent.

The suffering of sympathy is the highest type of suffering, and with degeneracy the power to sympathise grows less.

Sympathy being characteristic of the finest and most sensitive natures, involves the keenest suffering. Hence such suffering cannot be disciplinary. Were it so we could not believe that God suffers; and did He not suffer He would not be the Christian God.

We thus cannot regard suffering as God's punishment of the evil or His discipline of the good.

We are driven to believe God permits sin, though he does not ordain it; the same seems true of suffering, which is the product of sin.

Conceiving our present existence as but a stage in an immortal progress, we cannot regard it, even as a stage, as perfectly exhibiting the will of God. Rather, all creation, free within its limits, is only learning to conform to God's will, and is not always doing its best to learn.

Hence we conceive of God as neither ordaining sin nor suffering, but as ordaining freedom to do right or wrong; and in thus ordaining He accepts the greatest share of any suffering that may flow from it for the sake of our attaining to free co-operation with His will.

While it is thus impossible to think God ordains punishment, yet punishment exists in the numbing degeneracy that overtakes the misdirected life when it refuses to accept the warning of pain.

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Neither from the teaching of our Lord nor from the trend of our experience have we any assurance that all such erring personalities shall ultimately be saved; but our conception of creative purpose makes it necessary to believe that even if the individual mind finally disintegrate, it will be re-absorbed into the created life-force, to rise again through personality to union with God.

As things are, the return to the normal onward path of every erring soul is possible by faith in God's re-creative power.

CHAPTER XX

SALVATION BY JOY 265

Christian repentance ought to be a glad thing.

It is no longer possible for us to suppose that God is partial; His whole creation, whether progressive or retrograde, must have His impartial favour.

God's purpose being one, the perfection of the earthly state and the ultimate perfection of humanity in a purely spiritual state must be inter-dependent parts of that purpose.

Hence we need to cultivate both the outward and visible and the inward and spiritual departments of life.

The long process of physical and social evolution points to a future earthly state in which the law of God will be written in the heart of man and of things.

But we cry for something earth can never give, and religious experience brings ever stronger assurance that the joys of earth are but steps to a more intense unearthly joy.

For the regulation of our life we need more explicitly to synthesise the earthly and the spiritual goals.

The teaching of Christianity and of science, truly interpreted, seem to encourage the belief that every step in an ascending progress brings keener consciousness of the inter-dependence of the parts of any whole, and that to live immortally unto God must be to live unto all our fellows and they to us.

The thought that conceptions of material perfection and spiritual perfection are incompatible is directly contradicted by what we know of the fullest spiritual life, which will be found to best adjust the outward and the spiritual in its purpose.

If our Lord affirmed a synthesis of both the earthly and the heavenly hope never made before, His eschatology must have been ill understood by His hearers. We are yet dazed by its splendour.

Dante saw that a perfect earth must be part of God's scheme.

To sum up:

(*a*) The Christian doctrine that Jesus must needs, by reason of His union with God, accept what befell Him in fulfilling His mission and require His followers to make

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the same sacrifice, reflects the thesis that the Creator is in part "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" in His creation.

(*b*) The Christian aspiration "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," reflects the belief that God designs a free earthly creation to become, in co-operation with Him, "good."

(*c*) Our belief that mankind is one, making it man's duty to work for humanity present and future, involves the conviction that the earthly perfection of the race is part of every man's own salvation.

Faith, hope, charity, receive an enduring stimulus in the belief that the very image, the very life of God is latent in all things and is being evoked from all things.

Because the Christian revelation shows God as opposed to all pain and wrong, and shows Him as suffering in all pain and wrong, the world is saved by the joyful realisation that God Himself is its Saviour.

Christian repentance is the turning from all thought that in God is any darkness at all.

INTRODUCTION

There are three common hypotheses of the origin of our universe.

These three set forth by analogies and examined—

1. The Materialistic hypothesis—that all things mechanically evolve, and are mere combinations of matter.
2. The Psychic hypothesis—that spirit, potential in matter, has been the formative principle, and will become more and more dominant.
3. The God hypothesis.

The strong and weak points of each hypothesis considered.

If all three were equally reasonable, the fact that the third satisfies feeling and activity as well as reason is likely to make it always the belief of the greater part of mankind; but there is no moral defect involved in the acceptance of any of these theories by men who honestly find their natures satisfied by them. The theist must whole-heartedly allow that an honest man's intelligent adherence to what seems to him truth cannot be offensive to God; while materialist or psychist must not accuse theist of lack of candour for adhering to the God hypothesis even though his reason may not be wholly satisfied; for it is probably quite as candid to adhere to what satisfies volitional and emotional nature, although reason be not wholly convinced, as to reject a satisfying belief merely because no reasonable proof can be offered.

The fact of the diverse and unnumbered multitude living in what they believe to be consciousness of God, must be considered in weighing the evidence for the God hypothesis.

INTRODUCTION

THERE are three theories about the origin and nature of our universe which we now meet every day. I can best set them forth imaginatively by two analogies, remarking, first, that any analogy for the universe must be absurdly inadequate.

Once, in the Western States of America, I saw a show which was called "The Mystic Piano." The piano was set on a platform, and there, all alone, it played classical music all day, and I was told that the music improved in quality and execution each day. The keys and pedals could be seen to go down and up. The crowd, including some Indians in their blankets, surged all day round the barrier, and a large "gate" was taken. I supposed—and we will assume the supposition true—that a musician sat in another room pressing buttons. I am certain that the music I heard was that of a well-known composer.

Now, let us take the piano, with its complex structure, its complicated movements, and its brilliant music, to represent our physical universe with all its mass and motion and life, including the psychic or spiritual life of humanity; and let the

untutored Indian spectators represent ourselves. When we ask how it came to be there, what is the cause and nature of its music, I think the hypothesis of those who are materialists is that the piano makes the music, and as we have no evidence whatever that any one moves the piano or constructed it, we are bound to rule out those ideas, and accept the material of the piano, with its power of motion, as primal facts, its construction and music arising from a succession of changes which proceed according to laws discernible by close study.

A second hypothesis is that of some force that we might call the force of life-wisdom or spirit, producing matter and entering into co-operation with matter to produce the various present forms of life, and finally human life. For this theory the man pressing the buttons is the spirit or life-wisdom, which has produced all the form we see. In man, for example, the body with its complex structure of brain and nerve, is the piano ; within it is the life-wisdom, producing changes in will, emotion, thought, with their concomitant changes in the brain.

The third hypothesis is that the construction of the piano and the nature of the music require a constructor and composer to be assumed, and man's natural desire for unity and economy of assumption causes him to consider these two as one. This hypothesis gives full weight to the assumption of the unseen operator as an integral part of the machine, but urges the fact that we observe his power of execution to be limited to a certain musical programme, and his power of

choice limited to variations within that programme. Yet we perceive growth ; his execution becomes better by practice, his choice more artistic. It is urged, on this hypothesis, that there is no evidence that he constructed the piano or composed the music, and that therefore a greater mind than his, with larger power of choice, must be assumed as the first cause of both.

Fully granting the inadequacy of the analogy, I want to use it for pointing out some facts concerning the views of the universe here typified.

The first hypothesis, known as "naturalism," like worn-out gear passing from rich to poor, has descended from the schools to the workshop, and we may fail to give full weight to the fact that it is a perfectly consistent whole, and not to be taken as merely satisfactory in parts. If any one can conceive that in the very beginning the piano could begin to be of its own potentiality, I think that they ought to have no more difficulty in assuming that the most splendid passages of the music could be originated entirely by the motions of the piano. If motion in matter had power to form the four carved claws of the piano's feet, what reason have we to suppose that it could not result in the finest music ? or, in other words, if the meanest flower that blows can be produced by successive changes in matter, why cannot the emotion with which the poet regards it be also conceived as their product, and the most exalted mystical experiences of the saint only other variations of the same materialistic succession ? On the other hand, if we hold this theory, it is very

necessary to keep in mind that the most elaborate study of the piano, from which we might deduce all the powers of wood and steel, the most exhaustive study of the music, from which the whole science of harmony could be built up, the experience of all the emotion and thought which the music could arouse, could never lead one any nearer to the discovery of the invisible operator unless some material connecting wire could be discovered between the piano and the next room. If, for example, the piano were played by some process analogous to wireless telegraphy, successive generations of ignorant spectators could waste themselves in studying the mere piano and the mere music ; it would require the fetch of faith to assume the operator.

Then, with regard to the second hypothesis, it likewise can be made to explain all the facts as well as it can explain the least of them. According to this theory, there is an unseen operator pressing buttons who is the cause of the movements in the piano and of the whole nature and quality of the music, and was, farther back, the cause of the successive changes in matter which constructed the piano. The fact that his power of execution and choice are now observed to be imperfect, because still improving, does not alter the fact that he is the only cause to be seen which could have constructed the piano and the music. If, then, we are forced by our unwillingness to assume unnecessary multiplicity of causes, to rule out any other maker of the piano or composer of the music, the fact of the obvious improvement in the music will not alter

the assumption that the musician, as the force of life-wisdom, by constantly working upon the matter of the piano must have produced its present construction, must have beaten out his sonatas and stereotyped them so that he can repeat them at will and in varying order. And here, again, it is important to observe that the utmost study and analysis of the sonatas played by the operator upon the piano, the utmost experience of the sentiments and thought they excite, could never lead the spectators any nearer to the composer. They would, under this hypothesis, refer them all to the persistent work of the unseen operator who is part of the machine.

To translate the figure. If one sees no necessity to ascribe the wisdom manifested in life to anything behind the life-force itself, I do not see why he should suppose man's religious experiences to be anything more than the form which the growing, stretching, ever-originating life takes, accidentally as it were, in the process of its risky enterprise, projecting on the heavens its own likeness—like the Brocken spectre—into whose lips it naturally puts one voice of its own dialectic. The sonatas of the mystic piano may well represent not only the tumult of human passions and efforts, but the multitudinous expression that life gives itself in the animal and vegetable worlds, where no man profits by it. Whoever has sailed over the warm shallows of some Pacific island in a glass-bottomed boat, will know that the fish of a thousand iridescent tints diving among the sunlit seaweeds of the rhythmic deep, is as suggestive of a paradise as the lark wheeling up above banks of gorse and blossoming may into the

rosy mists of an English dawn. If both be the experiments of a wisdom that can be identified with the life they manifest, I see no reason to assume that man, "pealing the psalm to wintry skies," is anything more than a like experiment.

With regard to the third hypothesis, granting that to the spectators nothing is or can be visible but the piano, that nothing is or can be audible but the music, granting that some of them have assumed the piano to be the sole cause of the music, and that some of them have assumed an unseen operator, there would seem but one reason for any one assuming a greater musician than the operator to be the composer, a greater mechanician to be the constructor, that is, that neither of these gives an adequate explanation of the facts involved. What we need to explain is, how the piano and its music can be derived from either the mere piano, or the piano plus the musician whose limited power is manifested in his imperfect execution. On the materialistic hypothesis the material of the piano has been analysed, and its simplest elements, matter and motion, have been accepted as the cause of its construction and the music it produces. Under the second hypothesis the operator, whose repetitions, with but slight variations, proclaim his limited power of composition, is held to be the composer. It would seem to be merely the inability of some minds to find either of these explanations adequate that produces the hypothesis of a Mozart or a Broadwood.

Now it will be immediately seen that this analogy for the universe is not as good as it would

be if the spectators could by observation discover that the piano and its sonatas, as a matter of fact, did apparently grow all of themselves out of simpler forms of existence. I will therefore take another analogy, in which this is the salient point.

Some children of my acquaintance lived in a British dependency near a little wood where they often played. One day they went there and were surprised to find a new and delightful object. Just above the mossy carpet, on the bole of a large tree, a broad ledge of some firm substance was fixed. Their mother described it to me as in beauty and form like a newly-risen sun amid the darkness and neutral tints of shadow and lichen and moss. It was flat on the top, forming a satisfactory table for dolls' tea-cups ; it was beautifully fluted round the outer edge like a sea shell ; it was thick against the tree underneath, in the form of a bracket ; it was of a splendid colour, a carmine pink with raylike lines of deeper colour. To children, of course, such a huge fungus growth established within a day or two was a marvel. As they did not believe in elves they joyfully attributed its authorship to God. Their comments on its beauty and its convenience for their games rang like a hymn of praise. Very soon, however, a carmine rim appeared higher up on the tree. It was observed to grow visibly. For one long, hot day they ran to and fro with excited reports of its progress, and within a day or two it was as large and as hard as the first. But this second fungus, its conditions of growth no doubt disturbed by the children, grew distorted, ugly, and blood-red,

and it hung over the other, making it useless as a table. Their faith in divine providence as related to funguses did not survive the knowledge that such ledges grew, like everything else in the wood, that they were as liable to be inconvenient as convenient, and that the farmer said they were caused by a disease in the tree. The very word "disease" and the blood-red colour made the whole loathsome to them. Here, then, were these little worshippers of nature as the manifestation of divine purpose, suddenly plunged into the belief that they played amid a system of self-evolving accidents, where beauty might be thought of as consisting solely in their own power of admiration, their own power of adapting accidents to their convenience.

Let us now take the wood and its funguses as standing for our universe, and let the children represent our theorists. Again the analogy is inadequate; again I merely use it in order to make remarks on a difficult subject with some clarity. Those who maintain the hypothesis of God as the origin and controller of our universe must, if they are thinkers, perceive clearly that in the ordered growth of things death and decay are a part of the whole economy of the wood. It is, in fact, quite impossible to conceive of a wood without death and decay as well as growth, and it is impossible to think of death and decay without large opportunity of parasitic growths, beautiful and ugly, which might have been healthy forms of their type of life, but have become the disease of a higher form of life.

Again, it is necessary to note that sudden occurrences which look like magic, which are of the most extraordinary beauty and convenience, and other occurrences which have the most disgusting appearance and are merely obstructions to the working of other things, occur within the range of the same laws, as do all those things which by their constant occurrence have become familiar. It is only ignorance—lack of the knowledge within our reach and lack of reflection on that knowledge—that could make any theorist think otherwise. If we find the creative power of God to be for us on the whole the most satisfactory account of the origin of the wood, we must ascribe all that belongs to its economy, all the opportunity it offers to disease and defect, to the same power. (I use the word "God" here as equivalent to creative mind and will.)

Those who do and those who do not hold the hypothesis of God alike must admit that the most thorough study of the wood makes two points evident: first, that its most futile and unexpected features are still within the range of the laws that govern the whole; and, secondly, that the utmost calculation of the greatest calculating genius the world has known could not possibly foresee them, could never accurately photograph the wood one hour in advance. Here, then, urge those who oppose naturalism, we have something of which the words law, force, matter, accident, chance, give no adequate account. We have spontaneity; we have perpetually before us a future which exists not until it is falling into the

past. But when, to explain this, we call in a spirit of life in which resides all the wisdom that constructs the beauty and order manifested in the wood, and to whose inadequacy all the defects and abnormalities are due, we are not satisfied. The elephant of natural law and mechanical sequence is standing upon the tortoise of the spontaneous life spirit, whose inadequate power either to know precisely what it would be at or to work its will in recalcitrant matter is only too obvious.

If we insist upon conceiving a more adequate cause for the universe as it is, and postulate a good God with a purpose such as we can in part understand, we cannot by that means get away from the fact that the vast and appalling mechanism of the universe shows no bias such as we count divine, and that life in its wild profusion disports itself in many irrelevant, absurd, and abominable forms. The traditional doctrine that all things happen according to God's will becomes more and more difficult.

I think that, even apart from religious doctrine, the greater number of men will continue to believe in the hypothesis of divine Intelligence, because life does not explain mechanism, nor does mechanism explain the spontaneity of life, and the plain man requires a divine Understanding to combine both.

Life is, after all, an experience and not a theory ; the theorists are few, the living are many. The ordinary man is so accustomed every hour of the day to face impassable barriers which a greater power of mind can remove, that he naturally refers all that humanity recognises as beyond its powers

to a higher Intelligence. The servant when in a difficulty comes to his master, to whose better-trained mind the solution is plain ; the master in a difficulty calls in an expert ; and experts, when at a loss, await the genius who in time comes to their aid. And while the mere thinker may maintain that the most natural solution of the riddle of the universe is the most likely to be false—is to be rejected, indeed, simply because it is natural—men who derive what thought they have from their own personal experience of life will probably continue dumbly to refer the riddle to divine Understanding. In the same way it is probable that the ordinary man will believe in a supreme purpose behind the diversities of life. It would certainly appear that man, who is a gardener, is likely to attribute the flora of his globe to a greater gardener ; man, who is a herdsman, is likely to attribute the fauna of his globe to the breeding of a greater herdsman ; man, who hangs his chariot between wheels and makes paths and bridges for his armies, is likely to attribute "the process of the suns" to a greater engineer ; man, who is a father, is likely to attribute the procession of human souls to a greater father ; and all this without dogmatism or dependence upon particular revelation. And the more it is pointed out to him that all nature grows from within outward, and that all greatness begins by being very small, the more obstinately he reflects that there is nothing of which he has any experience of which the seed or germ or inception does not come from ripe organism or ripe intelligence. His chief

quarrel with the universe, indeed, is that he cannot in it get something out of nothing; and he is perhaps more impressed with the necessity for an adequate cause of any effect than with any other feature of life.

Another point which makes it the more likely that the world must in the main assume an intelligent Creator is, that this hypothesis, once assumed upon any ground of reason or sentiment or supposed authority, can be put to the proof as a matter of personal experience. It is the one hypothesis which every man who holds it does probably, some time or other, attempt to experiment upon; and while some men calling upon the Creator turn away repelled because they perceive no response, there would appear, from the annals of humanity, to be many more who become convinced, whether rightly or wrongly, that they receive response; and among these there are not a few who, with passionate conviction, give an intelligible account of what they believe to be a constant and unequivocal response. Although theorists holding other hypotheses of the origin and nature of the universe can explain this apparent response according to their own theories, their explanations have not the passionate force that the conviction of the others gives, and are, therefore, less likely to influence so large a portion of mankind. For even if it could be urged that all three explanations of the religious experience are equally satisfactory to reason, it is obvious that they are not equally satisfactory to feeling. Even assuming the scales of reason to be perfectly

balanced between God and no-God, the positive, personal conviction of the religious man is a something more thrown into the scale.

But there cannot be supposed to be the slightest moral delinquency indicated in the candid acceptance of the mechanical, or the spontaneous, or the divine, hypothesis of the universe by the man who honestly finds his powers of mind best satisfied, even provisionally, by any one of these. It would seem at first entirely absurd to make this trite remark, but, in the light of much modern controversy, it is not superfluous to say that the religious Theist could not more seriously take God's name in vain than in proclaiming any man's intelligent adherence to what seems to him truth to be offensive to God. It is also evident that it is much worse than a waste of breath for the materialist to accuse the Theist of determined ignorance or lack of candour. It is quite possible that the utmost knowledge in progressive science and the sternest reasoning upon scientific discovery form a slower and less satisfactory way of arriving at the secret of the universe than the way of personal experiment in religion; it is also possible that while man's psychic powers are not in complete unity it is quite as honest for a man to adhere to what satisfies his emotional and volitional nature, although his reason be dissatisfied, as to adhere to what merely satisfies reason while the rest of his nature cries out against it. It can at least be observed within any generation or any system that a man with healthy emotions and healthy will

assimilates on the whole as much general truth as a man with little of these, but with a keen reason.

Many minds find great moral difficulty in attributing ugliness, anguish, and sin to divine purpose ; it is easier for them to forgo, even at much expense of their own joy, the belief in God. When the religiously inclined mind seeks to refer all the small happenings of daily life to divine foreknowledge and divine intention, the discrepancy between these and anything we can conceive as the expression of goodness becomes to candid thought very glaring. There is philosophy that can explain this whole difficulty so that it appears for the hour to vanish ; there is faith that can ignore it or even glorify it, especially as it recedes into the past ; but to the plain man it remains an ever-increasing difficulty as his sensitiveness and powers of thought grow keener in the increasing stimulus of civilisation. I think we need to face this difficulty very frankly. I think we need to use it as a searchlight by which to inspect, and perhaps amend, our traditional notions of divine providence.

While it would seem that most men will adhere instinctively to the notion of a God who understands and carries out His purposes, it does not follow that they can continue to accept the traditional religious teaching that all that is is the direct expression of the divine will.

The fact remains that there are, even now, among the dwellers on earth, a great, unnumbered multitude, scattered in all nations, silent, unobtrusive folk, without mutual resemblance, to whom personal conversation with God seems to be the great,

the only absolute, certainty of their lives. Joy is theirs—joy beyond all words, often beyond even the practical outward expression of lightsome demeanour, yet often including that also. Within their hearts is an ever-growing persuasion that joy unspeakable surrounds them in the unseen and still awaits their ultimate discovery. They will refer to this authority or that as the basis of their belief, but the fact that, while it grows year by year more strong, more pervasive of the whole sphere of their consciousness, it remains outwardly incommunicable, is perhaps an indication that its true source cannot be cited among religious authorities on earth. Further, this incommunicable and joyful assurance in God, which in emergency is seen to be the very garment of salvation, the robe of righteousness, is certainly not the reward of anything we recognise as ethical merit. Many who attain to the highest merit of this sort are without it; many who possess it have not earned it by exalted conduct, and would be the first to disclaim moral pre-eminence. In any right-minded consideration of religious evidence this important fact must be taken into account. To the present writer it appears to weigh down the scale on the side of the God hypothesis.

CHAPTER I

QUALITIES OF PURPOSE

Belief in creative Intelligence involves belief in creative purpose. The conditions under which we seek truth require us to make the facts we know the basis of inference as to the nature of God's purpose.

The qualities of purpose considered in concrete life—

1. Purpose exercised between precise forecast and exact fulfilment. This only possible for the mere mechanic working in inanimate matter.
2. Inventor or artist works out new ideal in inanimate matter. Forecast less precise; result less accurate.
3. Gardeners and herdsmen work out inward ideals in the material of life. These desire only the perfection of the life they tend, without forecasting individual variation.
4. The schoolmaster, parent, or missionary works out inward ideals in a higher form of life. The higher the material in which the purpose must be worked out, the stronger and nobler must be the purpose.

This is the law of purpose; and we may infer from it that God executes His purpose in the sphere of autonomous life, that the divine Will is not a force that works mechanically between precise forecast and exact fulfilment.

CHAPTER I

QUALITIES OF PURPOSE

If we can and do think of ourselves and our universe as the outcome of creative Will and Intelligence we are thereby committed to a belief that God has produced the stuff of which body and mind are made, and is ever sustaining and arranging the universal life. The pious phrase, "the will of God," is always, and rightly, intended to refer to the universal purpose that runs like a thread of directing force through every detail of the world-process. Unfortunately we have for generations couched our follies, bigotries and ignorances in sentences in which God's will is either subject or predicate, so that it is natural enough that many good and intelligent people should now turn with a moral shudder from the conception of the divine purpose presented by much current religion. We need to realise that, although intelligent volition implies purpose not only in all that is done but in the method by which it is done, this does not imply that all that takes place is in accordance with the purpose. Whether that be so or not will depend on the

material in which the purpose is worked out. We want now to consider the material with which God has chosen to work.

If (*a*) we are seeking nothing but truth, if (*b*) we are true to ourselves, and if (*c*) we are true to the first principles of Christianity, we must take firm hold of the facts of the universe as we know them, and use them as the basis of inference with regard to the purpose of God.

(*a*) If we are seeking nothing but truth, we shall seek not to over-value or under-value any fact because it is pleasing or displeasing. It is much the fashion at present to discard facts that are pleasing to the whole nature on the plea that they are deceptive to the reason. This is no reason for discarding them ; it is a reason why we should be careful not to over-value them.

(*b*) The salient truth about ourselves—a primal truth of personality, of humanity—is, I take it, that we live by what is positive, not by negatives ; by faith, not by suspicion ; by social amenity, not by war ; by love, not by fear.

(*c*) The first principle of Christianity, I take it, is that the material universe, as it comes nearest to, and most intensely into, our own lives, is not deceptive, but is a true parable of the everlasting reality. Else the Incarnation were a mere fancy and fatherhood futile as a symbol of divine love.

If we start from such standpoints we shall not be unwilling to consider concrete life in seeking for indications of divine purpose. We must first perceive that the most meagre and thin conception of purpose we have is that which is exercised between

a precise forecast of results and an accurate fulfilment of the forecast. With small portions of what we call "dead matter" man can deal thus, but only with things that can be reproduced by being measured and weighed. Tables, clocks, for example, can be turned out by the hundred exact to pattern ; but the first clock, the first table, etc., must have grown under the creative imagination of man to be something more than or different from the mental forecast. Now, the will that works in conjunction with creative imagination in man is necessarily a stronger and more enduring form of volition than that which is exercised in merely hewing and beating or building matter into mechanical replicas, because it must battle against obvious nullity. It must be supported by faith in what is as yet unseen and unfelt. When we come to purely artistic work—the making of the statue, the painting, the poem, the symphony—we come again upon a necessity of pitting will against material nothingness during the whole working out of the conception, and every true artist knows that what lures him on, and at the same time wars against him, is what seems to be a certain faint degree of autonomy or self-assertion in the matter in which he works. Sounds, colours, forms, letters—these all seem to have a certain power of, here accepting, there rejecting, the minuter details of the artist's conception ; so that his ideal, struggling with the material of its expression, grows and strengthens if he persists in working it out. This persistence, although it may be so great a joy that he is conscious of no inward battle, is certainly a higher form of will—

it takes more out of the sum of his life's energy—than the volition put into merely mechanical work, but the result is not so accurate.

Take, further, the will exercised by the husbandman, who is working with what we hold to be elementary forms of life. The long patience, the battle with the elements for the protection and nourishment of the life that yields his increase, is purpose of a high sort. Here we can examine in detail the vocation of gardener, which combines that of husbandman and artist. Our thinking about the culture of living things is rather confused, because we do not distinguish between the work given merely to conditions of life (which is mechanical) and work given to shaping the life itself. The labourer who digs the ground, who heats the glasshouse, who builds the shelter, who gathers the crop, may or may not be the gardener—he may be merely the tool of the gardener; I mean here by "gardener" one who works out a useful and beautiful purpose in living material. Let us consider how the volition of a gardener differs from that of a mechanic. If, when a flower did not blow to suit him, he could effect his purpose by pushing or hammering it—if, in fact, he could use brute strength or mechanical force to the direct accomplishment of his end—he might work with no more complex volitional force than the mechanic; but as force can only be used upon his conditions, as his results can only be attained by patient nursing, selecting, training, and so forth, his will must be exercised through a greater sphere of his own nature in order to express itself in a

successful garden. It is therefore a higher form of purpose. How far, then, we have travelled from the conception of will as operating perfectly between precise forecast and exact result! A gardener cannot will the exact form of every flower and leaf, for living form never repeats itself. Every blossom on every yearling plant is different from every other that went before it. What he wills is the perfection, after its kind, of everything that he plants or sows, and to that end he provides the means of life and wards off adversity. We do not say for a moment that, because his will is never more than partially fulfilled, his will was imperfect; nor do we imagine for a moment that each flower has not a certain degree of autonomy which the gardener delights in, so that if it perfectly fulfil the gardener's will it will not be exactly like any other of its kind. Adverse forces in the garden have also a certain degree of autonomy. They are not according to the gardener's will; but certain measures which he might use to get rid of them entirely would also be detrimental to the flowers and fruit. The cold blast injures; but a wall to windward would be, on the whole, more injurious. The parasite injures; but to sterilise earth and water would be to deprive the plant of the means of life.

In short, the artist in inanimate matter exercises a higher volition than the mere mechanic, but with more uncertain result: the artist in life exercises a stronger, more complex purpose, with still more uncertain result.

Again, we are apt to fall into confusion when we compare the relative values of a garden and a

picture of a garden. The picture lasts, the garden is ever changing; we can enjoy the picture always, in conditions suited to our artificial, housekeeping tastes; therefore we give a higher relative place to the picture and its painter than to the gardener and his garden. But we may question whether so high a quality of mind goes into the picture as into the garden. Take him all in all, which is likely to be the better man, the gardener or the painter of gardens? It is proverbial that gardeners are apt to be "good men," and the reason commonly given is that they work as God works, in nature, and not in anything of man's contriving; and this perhaps indicates a true feeling after the truth suggested above, though any embodiment of it which would seem to imply that God's purpose cannot find its highest expression through human purpose cannot be accepted. In any case, from my point of view, I may here assume that the gardener exercises a higher function than the landscape painter, just as the nurse who rears children exercises a higher function than the portrait painter, as I think all will admit.

Next in the scale we come to the breeder of animals; but here we find ourselves so much involved in much that is probably abnormal and debased in our methods and aims that it is almost impossible to possess freedom of thought. The winning horse! The toy dog! The prize pig! The caged bird! The rush of shame that comes to us when we think how far both the use and abuse of these depart from any ideal of the highest life, animal or human, that we may form, causes

us to feel that here is a department of life yet to be possessed, a department that future ages may claim as their own special joy, just as our age claims joy in the beauty of the untrammelled and unused portions of the earth as peculiarly its own.

We may pass on to volition exercised in the shaping of human character. Take, as example, the work of a teacher. If he is intelligent the last thing he desires is that his pupils should become exactly like himself, or like one another, or like any pattern he can imagine. That which makes him care for them is that each is a new creation, a unique personality, developing his life in its own proper way. To each he will give, if he is wise, a large and increasing degree of autonomy. Or, again, let us take the father whose purpose is to evoke the highest possible life in his children. His is a function greater than that of training. Long before the children are born he must sanctify himself that they may be sanctified ; and later, parental affection and unity of interest are part of the training. In parenthood, then, we seem to get the highest form of purpose that we know, but we also get a larger degree of autonomy or self-assertion or self-direction in the material, and this autonomy demands recognition in the method employed. All that is true of the teacher is true of the parent ; but the teacher who deals with the child only for fixed portions of time may be more rigid in his law than the parent without warping the growing thing. We all recognise that in the family the son must have a larger degree of autonomy within the width, so to speak, of his

father's will than he has in the school. No good father, for example, wishes to choose his son's wife for him, but we know that one sort of choice would be against his will and another sort of choice in accordance with it. And all that is true of fatherhood is, of course, true of motherhood. The religious or social missionary combines in himself the purpose of father and of schoolmaster. His is a larger family, a larger school. Like St. Paul, he travails in birth for the new hearts that he wishes to bring into life. Like the ideal teacher, the words of wisdom "burn" within him until he sees formed a new mind in the humanity with which he comes in contact.

Let us, for example, ask in what sense a good human father, who had the power, would order "all things" for his children with "never-failing providence." All that he would do, or would wish to do, would be to so order things for them at every moment and in every place that they should have the highest opportunities of joyous development. This could not, however, mean that most of the happenings of their lives—their joys and sorrows—were all of his devising, for joy and sorrow, advantage and disadvantage, depend on the personal attitude, and most of the happenings of life depend on personal decisions. The parent is much more than an artist, but in so far as he works to realise an inward conception of health and beauty and power in his children, he is an artist, and the material in which he would express his conception is personal life. The purpose which he must exercise is the highest and

strongest of which we have any conception, but he could not exercise it in any high way, he certainly could not realise it, by ordering their joys and sorrows, their failures and successes.

In all this we perceive grave cause for asking whether we have any reason to conceive God's purpose as a force which works rigidly between precise forecast and exact fulfilment. In all purpose there must be forecast and fulfilment, but in a great purpose there must be more than these, for a great purpose is only exercised in material that will not admit of merely mechanical workmanship ; there must be a true marriage between the ideal and the material of its expression ; and the result, as far as our knowledge of life enables us to judge, must be a new unity.

CHAPTER II

CREATIVE PURPOSE

When increasing knowledge shatters the traditional pictures of the unknown it is better to build these up again rather than seek to live by a faith unaided by imagination, always bearing in mind that all words and images are merely symbols of truth.

Assuming God as first cause, we must try to picture His relation to creation.

Metaphysical difficulties notwithstanding, we postulate Creator and creation, and must paint the unknown in analogies from the life we know.

Matter, whether organic or inorganic, is now described in a way that to the plain man implies that it is only a form of energy. Energy may be thought of as the body of life. Let us picture how this creation can have come to be.

We may conceive of creation as the gift of life.

Autonomy is of the essence of life; for since we insist that man is self-directing, spite of scientific evidence that he is determined, we need not suppose all other things entirely different from him in this respect.

In the beginning we get motion, tension, attraction, repulsion, and by degrees what we call the "inanimate" universe—God exercising in this stage something analogous to mechanical purpose.

When life begins to express itself in organic forms, autonomy becomes more decided; God's purpose works more intricately.

Along the line of intelligent life we get greater and greater autonomy, which at last calls for what we know as the highest form of purpose—that of the parent or teacher.

Pantheistic thought identifies the life of the universe with God; but life lends itself both to good and evil, to progress and retrogression. It appears saner to regard life as the not-God, which came from God, and is being trained by Him to form with Himself a new unity.

It is never life that is limited, but the power of the organism to utilise life for its own ends. The perfection of the organism would be its power to utilise life fully for its highest end.

When life at last in man becomes conscious of itself, and able consciously to respond to God, we get "spiritual life," which entails pre-eminently the power to utilise more and more of the universal life for the highest end.

The speculations of this chapter seem to harmonise with experience.

CHAPTER II

CREATIVE PURPOSE

While the imaginative conceptions that cling about old theories are gradually dispelled by increased knowledge, our religious life suffers if we do not patiently and diligently try to replace them. If we would frankly admit to ourselves that all our words, all our images, are only symbols of truth, and would at the same time always patiently try to rebuild mental images in the place of those that have been cast down, we should be wiser than in attempting to maintain a vital religion without any resting-place for our religious imagination. We ought to bring to the task great reverence, and a sincere and kindly love of all science ; we want logic also, as it may be applied to symbolic ideas, proving that they are not unreasonable, showing that, in relation to symbols admitted, other symbols may or may not be fairly assumed. Imagination must be the servant of all these. Just as the historian, who keeps most rigidly to such facts as he may ascertain and deduce, needs, in order to gain any real knowledge from these facts, the historical imagination, so he who would think sanely about the unknown must

use the religious imagination. The powers of the mind work with one another in unity, as do different human minds in a corporate body, and the greatest, the imagination, must always be the servant of all. It is the law of life that the greatest shall serve the least, and only in obedience to it can anything worthy be produced.

If we conceive of creative Intelligence as the first cause, and call that cause God, we are obliged to form some picture to ourselves of the process of creation.

I do not think it is possible in metaphysical thought to conceive of Creator and creation in a monistic universe — one of the two must be set aside as an illusion. But I think belief in both Creator and creation is forced upon us, although it does not seem possible for human thought in its present condition to be satisfied with a pluralistic universe. But it is quite possible that M. Bergson is right—that what seem to us the necessities of metaphysical thought have arisen from the conceptions gradually gained by humanity from dealing with the physical universe as if it were stable. We are, in the course of ages, coming to know that it is the stability of things that is the greater illusion, but, all the same, we are forced to deal with them as if they were stable. Very likely it is from millenniums of this practical dealing that what seem to us the necessities of metaphysical thought have grown up. Metaphysics apart, we must go to life as we know it for those analogies which can make any safe foothold for our thought in its dealings with the unknown.

The thing that bulks largest in our idea of the universe is always matter. The fact that the universe is material seems at once the most evident and the most important observation that we make about it. The earth, the air, the ether, the sun, the planets, the stars—these are all alike material ; for all that we know about them is that they behave in a calculable way ; and the ways in which they behave themselves we call the laws of inorganic matter. There are other and different ways of behaviour, and these ways we call the laws of organic matter. A tree, for example, grows up in spite of the pull of gravitation which, if it were not alive, would keep it to the level of the earth. We know that all matter, organic and inorganic, is constantly changing. In this respect the difference between the thing that seems most dead and that which seems most alive, may be compared to the difference between a leaping, rapid stream or dashing waterfall and a glacier. Both are fluid, both are on the way to water the plains of earth. The stream leaps and dashes at the rate, let us say, of a mile in five minutes, and a glacier moves, say, at the rate of an inch in five years. Every particle of our bodies changes, I understand, in a few years. Our tables and fire-irons and earthenware may be handed down from generation to generation intact ; but where are the tables, fire-irons, and earthenware of a thousand years ago ? or of the Roman period ? Except in case of rare preservation they are dissolved into their own material elements as the matter in our bodies more quickly is dissolved.

There is no inorganic speck or crumb of this solid earth, or of the sun or stars, that is not moving within itself, that is not full of its own motion and has not a behaviour of its own that is affected by and in harmony with everything else in the universe. Everything that is solid, everything that is liquid, everything that is gaseous—all these are built up or composed by something we call chemical action, then scattered or decomposed in the same way. Some of these changes we can see going on every day; and science tells us that the very stars are sometimes dashed to pieces and form again. Then when we come to what we call organic life, what does it do? It builds up various organic forms, and these forms dissolve again. It used to be supposed that matter was one thing and life another, and no one has ever caught life apart from matter or matter static; what we call matter is always in motion, always doing something. Whether it be organic or inorganic, matter is now described in a way that to the plain man seems to imply that it is only a form of energy, the difference between one solid and another being a difference in what is called electrical tension. If matter be thought of as a form of energy, energy may be thought of as the body of life. Now, of course, we do not know anything that can help us to explain the mystery of creation, but let us try to conceive how it might be.

We are thinking of God as existing uncreated and uncreating. If God acted He could not do less than give. Let us suppose that in the beginning creation was a gift. In becoming creator

God must give. Gift requires giver, receiver, and somewhat given. But we are thinking of nothing but God and creation, so the receiver and what was received were one. The divine Generosity would not give less than life. Giving life to itself involved giving the germ of freedom—of will, with life. We are now thinking of the very essence of this material universe—that which fills it to overflowing in its interstellar spaces, in its every atom of "inanimate" matter, in its every pore and cell—as life, life that clothes itself in energy as a body, life beautiful and abundant, unceasing in its activity, possessing its own autonomy; but in all its primal stages, in all its elements and beginnings, impersonal, unconscious, having only the first degree of blind autonomy.

We too easily think of man as by nature different from the rest of creation. However irrational the conviction, we are most of us entirely convinced that in human life, law—whatever it is that we call natural law—is only the garment of spontaneity; and why should we suppose, contrary to all evidence, that nature takes so large a leap as to make man different in this respect from all else? The evidence and arguments for determinism seem to me to be conclusive, yet the fruition of human life breaks forth from the conviction that the human will is free. We insist that man is free, though, as far as experimental science can teach, we learn that all man is and does is determined: can we, then, deny freedom to other things in our universe merely because they seem to be determined?

Let us, then, speak of this universe as living. Activity, autonomy, are of its essence ; and in its first activity we get tension, attraction, repulsion, and, by degrees, the whirlings, burnings, condensings, the music of the spheres, the morning stars singing together for joy, or, in a word, what we call the "inanimate" universe, of whose automatic ways we now know something.

God, whose purpose in giving life to itself must have been, as we are forced to think, the ultimate self-consciousness and self-direction of life, may, then, be conceived as exercising in the simply physical stage only such purpose as the artist in things, or the mechanic, exercises, which, we have seen, is in man the lowest form of purpose, but which produces the most accurate results. We have no reason to suppose that the architecture of the universe is complete. We can conceive of the divine activity as ever that of the creative artist drawing out what is unexpressed, while that which is already expressed reproduces the character imposed on it in splendid mechanism.

Life having worked or grown into conditions fit here and there for its own higher development, we think of it beginning to express itself in organic forms in which it could exercise its autonomy in a higher degree, over which God's purpose could apparently be exercised in a higher degree. Let us always remember that we are thinking of autonomy as a real characteristic of life. That autonomy in the higher stage would be more highly developed and would require a greater scope ; but creative Intelligence and Generosity could never, as we say in

our language, "for an instant" leave it without such fostering benediction and persuasion as the higher artistic purpose must exercise when the material in which it would express itself is living. When we come to the beginnings of psychic development and its growth, we see that as the development of life becomes, as we say, higher and finer, autonomy exercises greater and more various powers of self-direction. Later on we find conscious self-direction; and in those stages higher activities of God's will and purpose are required, just as the purpose of school teacher and parent and social missionary is higher and stronger than that of gardener or mechanician. In vegetable life, in mere animal life, there must have been possible some degree of variation from the will of the Creator—*e.g.* the parasite becomes degenerate; in intelligent life room for variation between conformity to the purpose of God and deviation from it becomes of necessity greater—*e.g.* we get error and wickedness. Here, too, we get the beginnings and development of the conscious seeking for friendship with God and the intermingling or communion of purpose with Him.

Now, in all this we hold steadily to the conviction that God gave. There is an old French proverb which says, "Kings give; they do not lend." God so loved life that He gave life to itself. We are so made that we cannot think of a self without an "It" which is a not-self, an impersonal It; and thus we cannot think of God without a not-God. But in the impersonal It, in the not-God, God, if He be what we hold worthy, must be

fostering His purpose, and that purpose appears to be a degree of selfhood that can hold communion with Himself, and thus form a new unity.

The conception of creation involves limitation ; the conception of life involves progress or retrogression. The walls of the God-made channel through which it flows cast back whatever deviates from the full current. Each errant jet of life falls again into the stream behind the place to which it ought to have advanced. Faith in a creative power and purpose obliges us to believe that the advance is thus always assured.

We have conceived of each organism in which life is exercising itself toward greater complexity and greater variety as a thing which, while it makes a portion of life its very own, lives also within that ocean of life which is our universe. There is no limit to the life it can use for its own ends, because to the organism its universe is practically infinite ; what is limited is the capacity of the organism to utilise the life for its own ends; and it is the power to use fully what is given it for its own end, when that end is in harmony with God, that would be its perfection. We see the fostering purpose in the teaching and training of organisms to use more and more of what is given them for more and more perfect ends, while all the time autonomy consists in the organism being able to accept this influence or to use life for retrograde ends. The creative Intelligence must have what we may call telepathic communication with every grade of life in so far as each grade is capable of

responding to that creative Intelligence. When human intelligence can respond we get what we call "spiritual life."

I cannot regard "the spiritual nature" in man as a separate power; rather, I believe that, as the result of the direction of a man's ordinary powers toward God, he gets that consciousness of God's existence, and of his own ability to obey or defy God, which we commonly attribute to a "spiritual nature" and speak of as "spiritual life." [1]

We find that this last-developed, and as it seems to us highest, form in which human life can rightly exercise itself, gives man more power than any other of drawing in deep draughts of the universal life, and using it to fashion some portion of the earth into some higher stage in which the purpose of God can bear upon it more directly.

This is a conception in which, looking within ourselves and without, we find ourselves at home. "We feel that we are greater than we know," because we can, at times, transcend our ordinary power of assimilating the life principle of the universe. "We feel that we are greater than we know," because it is only in more complete union with God that we can thus transcend our ordinary powers. If we could conceive of a tree as having some dim form of psychic life or consciousness, it will be within that consciousness that it must feel the wellspring of life, and within it also must be dimly aware of the direction of God. Without it lie the conditions of its growth and permanence as an individual tree, but all its powers of assimilation

[1] See Chaptér V.

and adaptation come from within. Within an animal also, and within a man, the same will be true. Are we not all more or less familiar with the idea that we have a deep well to draw from, a well of life that is not our own proper life till we take it into ourselves and use it? When we find ourselves in communion with divine Spirit we know for the first time, and ever more clearly, that it is the self that is limited, not the life that wells up within, and in more conscious communion with God we may learn to transcend our ordinary powers of assimilating life, and by degrees to transcend them habitually.

We all draw on this common fund of life. The new Pantheism calls it God; but that is absurd unless we would be irreligious; for by this common life we think our worst thoughts as well as our best; evil grows more evil at the same rate, but not under the same persuasion, as good grows more good. We must regard "evil" as denoting any deviation from the most wholesome, and therefore fullest, life. Every such deviation, unless arrested by re-creative Influence, leads to loss of joy, loss of function, perhaps ultimate return, in latent form, to the common stream of life. In this we touch the nursery walls within which created life is being trained by God to form with Himself a new unity, and we are bound to believe that all effort for what is normal, good and joyous, is met by the re-creative power of God.

CHAPTER III

PROVIDENCE AND AUTONOMY

Can we detect in world evolution a purpose which tallies with the types of purpose we have found in man?

The order we perceive in inorganic nature tallies with such human purpose as we have called mechanical.

In the earliest stage of life physical strength and adaptation seem to be the aim.

Later on the aim seems to be a balance of physical force and intelligence; not the strongest body, nor the strongest intelligence, but the best combination of these persists. We therefore get defects in the physical nature and in intelligence handed down along the line of fullest life.

Later, when what we call God-consciousness or spiritual life is added, nature again strives for a balance of the three qualities; again defects in each aspect are handed down along the line of fullest life.

The purpose suggested by the development of human life is health of body and brain, excellence of intelligence, excellence of will power, excellence of the extra-regarding impulses which make for the perfection of corporate life. The prevailing desire of nature seems to be to rid itself of defects in all these.

The disease germ or parasite does not belong to the method, but militates against the purpose.

If this tendency to excellence of life indicates God's will, very much must happen in our universe which merely represents the will of the autonomous creature before it is won by the persuasive purpose of God.

If disease and defect were the will of God, God and the life-force would be at war.

But on what grounds do we claim that all that happens—including disease and defect—is "providential"?

Going back to what in man we saw to be the highest sort of purpose, we find that the teaching and training of autonomous life cannot mean the ordering of all its joys and sorrows.

We therefore assume that the supreme purpose of the universe may only be accomplished when the creature co-operates with the life-force, *i.e.* with God.

CHAPTER III

PROVIDENCE AND AUTONOMY

When we try to learn something of the divine Fatherhood from the human, without puzzling ourselves to say, "But if the human father were a God, He could do this, or He could do that"—assumptions which, after all, imply a knowledge at which we have not arrived—let us consider what science tells us concerning the development of the universe, and see whether such purpose as we may fancy we detect in it tallies with such types of purpose as we have found in man.

We have what we call "inorganic nature" always in motion, always moving according to what we call "law." Somewhere back, back in black gulfs of inconceivable durations, we think of dark stars — stars themselves, perchance, the cinders of burnt-out suns—blazing up by collision to form fresh nebulæ, producing the elements of which our sun and world are built. Within what we call inorganic nature, what can be detected to indicate purpose in matter that appears so orderly, except mechanical order? The physical energy of the universe is docile, rendering

perfect response to mechanical purpose. There is sufficient order in physical force to cause all men to admit that it may be perfectly ordered by supreme Mind for some supreme purpose. But there is no indication of what the beginning or end of that purpose may be. Apart from organic life the docile, calculable, inorganic world seems dead. Yet we are often forced, when we least expect it, to suspect that the poetry of motion, of light and shade, colour and outline, which we perceive in inorganic nature, is not our fiction, but something that impinges on reality only in a lesser degree than organic life itself, and is consequently akin to life, not to death.

When organic life appears upon the scene, we perceive a force more feeble according to mechanical standards, but which evinces a new complexity and a higher order of progress. It seems to have a greater degree of autonomy. Its every individual form and movement is unique, and it possesses a capacity for developing from one form to another —from frond to leaf, from moss to tree. Whether life adapts itself to its environment, or whether the environment calls forth each adaptation, we cannot tell ; but there is progress from simple to complex, from unconsciousness to self-consciousness. Can we detect purpose ? If we can it is only in the principle of natural selection, the persistence of the fit. But we see that every step of advance brings what appears to be temporary confusion as to what apparent perfection may be. Roughly speaking, we may say that in plants and all lower forms of animal life, merely material vitality and

adaptation is all that the purpose of life seems to aim at. But when the elements of feeling and self-movement come in, the fittest to survive are found to be those which have the new and the old elements of perfection in the nicest proportion. It is not, then, the creature with the finest body, or the creature with the finest rudimentary mind, that prevails, but the creature that possesses the best combination of the two. Were these creatures able to think, it is easy to see that a conscious confusion of ideals would arise. There would be among them conservatives and progressives. There would be the old ideal of merely physical perfection, and, side by side, the new ideal of mental power and fitness. The good old way of deciding which was the direct line of persistence by mere clash of physical force, would continue to seem the only practical standard for some, while others would exaggerate the advantages of strategy which an embryo intelligence made possible.

We see the same thing when the elements of moral and intellectual life are added. When the life of the herd becomes the life of the tribe, it is not the tribe with the best physique, or with the noblest purpose, or with the keenest intelligence, that seems to have prevailed; but the tribe with the best balance of all these. Thus we get physical defects, mental or moral defects, handed down in tribes that are *on the whole* best fitted to carry on life. And when distinct elements of what we call spiritual life are added (which we have defined as God-consciousness and consequent effort for communion with, or defiance of, an unseen power) we

get another prevailing element, which again has its place in that balance of faculties which ensures persistence. Each addition produces apparent confusion. When the life of the tribe is merged in national life, we find this confusion repeated in human consciousness. In the principle of selection what was true of tribes was, it is clear, true also of individuals. A weak body might be counterbalanced by a strong will or keen understanding or spiritual insight ; or any of these faculties might be weak, and the man still wholesome enough to be in the line of progress, to produce physical offspring, or ideas, which should persist.

Now, if we interpret all this by the hypothesis of intelligent purpose, one point is quite clear : it is not defect that the immanent mind is aiming at. The purpose suggested by the development of life is health of body and mind, excellence of the intelligence, excellence of the will-power, excellence of the extra-regarding impulses which make for the perfection of corporate life. The defects which are incidentally handed down with these excellences cannot be regarded as the result of purpose, for the stream of tendency runs always, as it were, through filter-beds, and the prevailing desire of nature seems to be to rid itself of defects.

Further, as it is complexity and balance that seem to be aimed at, we cannot speak of the perfection of simpler forms of life as an end, or as belonging to the method, when they act as the diseases of higher forms. They belong to the method when they act as food for, or as scavengers

to, more complex forms. When they are injurious it is always because of some defect in the higher form. The injurious germ which militates against the main purpose is resisted successfully by perfect health. Suppose that a tree in the primæval forest, after fulfilling its function, dies of old age. It is evident that unless nature packs it away in some cellar for other use, simpler forms of life may fitly hasten its dissolution. But these simpler forms of life can only attack it during its term of life through its own defects. As removers of dead matter they may appear to belong to the method; as torturers of living organisms they militate against the purpose.

If we are to regard God as the author of this the only purpose we can discern in nature—a purpose which seems to etch itself out against a background of much that seems purposeless—we are bound to admit that very much happens in the universe, very much happens to us, that is not according to His will. If we teach that every detail of the universe works rigidly according to God's will, we are driven to admit that the only purpose we can discern in nature is different from His, whatever His may be. Life at its best militates against disease and defect. If the purpose of God appoints these, God and the life-force are at war. But on what grounds do we claim that all that happens is "providential"?

Yesterday I observed two little children while an orange was offered to each. The one grasped it with delight; the other turned away with a cry of distress. They were too young to be

interrogated, but each no doubt had what we call "his own reasons." The one who cried had either formed so bright an anticipation that the reality disappointed him, or his life ebbed so low that he was terrified at what was harmless. Now, these children will go through the same circumstances and experience with very different joys and sorrows. In what sense can it be said that their respective joys and sorrows are of God's providence? Experience is determined by temperament, temperament is determined by the voluntary matings of past generations; its indulgence or alteration depends on will, which we hold to be self-directed.

To go back, we found the highest sort of purpose in man to be that of teaching and training the free intellectual and emotional life of others, adapting them to their environment, and at the same time improving its conditions. I think we can conceive of God influencing His whole creation in this way, persuading every grade of living things to assimilate more and more of the life-force, and thus go forward in the full tide of progress, while they are still free to close their pores, so to say, both to His wisdom and to the life that encircles them as an atmosphere.

There is very much in our concrete life that suggests that while we are free we are always more or less open to the influence of divine Wisdom. If we admit that God has given to the material in which He works out His purpose a certain degree of autonomy—given a varying degree as we ascend from the most simple form of matter to the most complex human organism—just because this

autonomy is real, the supreme purpose of the universe does not work "to will and to do of His good pleasure" except when the creature works out its own salvation, salvation being conformity to that good pleasure.

When the creature does so work, a higher thing is accomplished than could be wrought between precise forecast and exact fulfilment. When the creature does not so work, all that is required for the completion of God's purpose is that the energy used at variance with the purpose should be conserved until it gives itself to the ultimate service of the purpose, either by accepting the regenerative, re-creative influence of God, or by lapsing into the universal life to be re-formed.

This view of Providence seems to correspond with the aphorisms of the Gospel concerning prayer: any change for the better asked from God shall be realised in the future process of creation; every change that man can now make his own by faith is already accomplished. If all things were now divinely appointed, how could we understand this teaching?

CHAPTER IV

THE PURPOSE IN HUMANITY

Since God gave autonomy to His creation, He must have power to realise His purpose by that method.

As "faithful Creator" He must be related to His creation (1) by accepting the struggle between right and wrong as His own, (2) by thus ensuring a compensating gain to creation for all the suffering entailed by freedom.

We have found that in organic nature the stream of life discards disease and defect and failure in intelligence, in temperance and courage, in affection for offspring and co-operation with fellows.

In human affairs progress is more complex. Conscience, or satisfaction in virtue, seems to belong to the fullest force of human life. Life—sound, abundant, beautiful—does not flow along the generations of those who break through customs to gratify passion; it flows along the generations of the law-abiding, but also of those who disregard present law in the effort to mould and obey the higher law of the future.

The push of conscience must be seen not only in the will, but in the understanding.

Along this line we get the growth of the hope in social progress or personal immortality or both.

This is exemplified in the history of the human race. Nations with a religion of pessimism and fear show powers of accurate observation and vivid imagination; but advance in political justice and social amelioration are only found with those who hope in the future.

This hope develops intellect. Thus, intellectual as well as moral force is found necessary to fulness of life. A hopeful intellectual life makes for universal fellowship. Monopolies always yield to the advance of a fuller life.

Perfection of conscious life is to be manifested in physical health and beauty, mental genius and social love.

But the individual dies imperfect.

The perfect fulfilment of every individual life seems involved in any purpose of the universe worthy to be called divine.

As death and desuetude of ideas attach to any divine purpose we can detect here, we are driven to produce the line of hope beyond this world, towards a synthesis of individual and racial immortality.

CHAPTER IV

THE PURPOSE IN HUMANITY

We have said that, since we believe that God gave autonomy to His creation, we must also believe that in doing so He had power to realise His purpose by the method he had chosen.

The pregnant praise of the writer of 1 Peter, "a faithful creator," cannot be read without reminding us that creation must mean an obligation to another. In other words, we cannot think of God as creator and without obligation. From all that we know of life there is nothing worth having for which something must not be risked; but we know that it is not right for any one to risk more than he has to give, nor to allow that risk to involve others without the power to give compensation. If we are to conceive of God in His relation to the world at all (and as long as we think of Him as unrelated our conception of Him can only be negative) we cannot conceive of Him as risking the struggle of creation unless (1) that struggle is His own, and (2) His acceptance of that struggle ensures a compensating gain to creation. This compels us to conceive of Him as uniting

in entire sympathy with his whole creation and accomplishing for it some compensating end. If it be objected that it is presumption to assume all this true of God, I can only reply that with our sense of right and our limited understanding we seem bound thus to conceive of Him, taking the evidence of the world-process as our guide.

We must believe that the perpetual generosity or self-giving exercised by the Creator toward His creation would draw it God-ward and therefore toward perfection.[1] If, then, we can detect a certain dominating trend in biological evolution toward any end, we must hold this to indicate God's unwavering purpose.

Science gives us an immense congeries of facts that bear on the theory of evolution. The relative emphasis we lay upon them must remain a matter of interpretation. All that can be said for the following interpretation is that, with much diffidence, I have come to believe that the facts can bear it.

We find that in all organic nature the stream of full life, as it runs along the generations, discards physical disease or defect as unfit for its use. Later we find that if an animal fails in body or in intelligence, in temperance, courage, affection for offspring or co-operation with its fellows, it is likewise cast aside as unfit. It is noteworthy here that defect in one respect seems just as fatal to survival as defect in another.

Passing swiftly onwards to human affairs, we

[1] "Perfection" is used in these chapters, for lack of a better word, to mean that maturity of excellence which is the starting-point of new progress.

find that fulness of life pursues the same track in the beginnings of human history as in what we may call mere animal morality, but here the line of tendency is produced farther. There can be no question, looking at life in any wide aspect, that conscience, or satisfaction in virtue, is a life-force in the human will. In every stage of human custom or law there can be discovered three classes of actors—the criminal, the law-abiding, and the prophets, *i.e.* reformers with insight into the trend of events. Whatever the standard of virtue may be, life—sound, abundant, and beautiful—does not flow along the generations of those who break through customs to gratify their passions; it does flow along the generations of the law-abiding, and also of those who disregard present law in their struggle to mould and obey the law of the future.

Conscience, or satisfaction in virtue, operates whatever be the conception of virtue current. Some particular nun may feel greater satisfaction in a culpable neglect of domestic ties than any mother in her self-denying devotion to her young; a fakir may feel a greater joy in his neglect of sanitary conditions than the modern health visitor in disinterested service to the community. Thus we may have obedience to law which is unto death, for, while time always shows that health and character attain their greatest height among the law-abiding so long as the law is alive, time also shows that every stage of human order must develop into something higher or fail. Without the class of men whose energy of thought leads them to condemn what is for the sake of what

ought to be, every community must fail. By this law the trend of the outside life-force is seen to be in the development of the understanding also, as well as the development of the body. For conscience, or satisfaction in virtue, can be called an impulse of life in the will only in so far as it is also the impulse of life in the understanding. In the one it tends toward moral beauty, in the other toward genius. In the earliest human records there is no distinction between a good will and a good understanding, between the religious and the moral, or between the moral and the expedient, and it was in making these distinctions that the intellect developed. In most primitive conditions all questions were questions of religion : if it was a question of success in war it was a question of whether God would go before ; if it was a question of success in personal enterprise we questioned whether God's favour was with us or not. Very slowly came distinctions in thought between righteousness and temporal good ; more slowly still between religion and righteousness. The moment this last stage was reached, pressing into man's understanding on all sides came thoughts of a future polity in which religion, righteousness, and well-being would be one. I think that history shows that it is in correspondence with the vividness of this hope that the higher intellectual life advances. When we cry, "Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay," we are not moved from our position by realising that China has to-day perhaps the finest proletariat in the world. Moral beauty is here seen in the domain of the

will without intellectual struggle, and they who thus abide by their own standard of virtue will dwell in physical health and fecundity. Yet we know that there is a form of life worth much more than this, and that even the Oriental millions must advance toward a higher intellectual life if they are to become potent.[1]

The vividness of the hope of a far-off destiny in which religion and morality and advantage will be absolutely one, may take the form of belief in the continual progress of the race, or belief in the eternal progress of the individual life, or, as in many cases, it may seek to combine both beliefs. But, in any case, it is in company with this hope that we find experiment, and ever-increasing experiment, in the domain of science and applied science, politics, society, and religion. If we look historically upon nations in whose religion pessimism and fear predominate, although we are amazed at the accuracy and fulness of much of their observation—as shown, for example, in their detailed knowledge of the heavens—although we are amazed at the vividness of their imagination, we still perceive that the fetch of genius in discovery and invention, in political justice, in social amelioration, is only seen where the larger hope belittles fear. And in the East to-day, over large areas where fear still belittles hope, the impetus of genius in these directions is still lacking.

Few of us need any proof to establish the fact that the fulness of life that we see at an early stage

[1] Written before the Revolution.

in history manifest in physical health and moral beauty, runs along the line of hope and genius rather than along the line of pessimism and the commonplace. With all its risks, with all its set-backs and drawbacks, with all the mistakes that have proved the channels, not of life, but of death, we want no proof that the actual force of life runs along the line of intellectual as well as moral advance. There is no indication of any severance of interests between mind and body; although in the vast experiment of human life the advance of one may be a drain on the forces of the other because of ignorance (an example is the physical sterility of a few conspicuously intellectual generations), we quickly see that it is the lagging factor whose power must be conserved and developed to match the advance of the other. Should any one still question whether an intellectual element is necessary to fulness of life, let them ask under what conditions the China of to-day could become one of the dominant nations of the world.[1] Certainly only under the condition of developing in her law-abiding millions a new intellectual outlook, a new power of self-government, a passion for enterprise, and the high temper of hope.

Again, we can hardly question that the direction of a hopeful intellectual life is toward fellowship, universal fellowship, or love. In any department can we say of the belief in monopoly that it is a greater evidence of intellectual power than the desire for diffusion? Belief in monopolies of religion, of education, of power, of wealth—these

[1] Written before the Revolution.

have yielded all along the line of history; and that to which they have yielded is the advance of a fuller life. The ideal of democracy is as imperishable as the ideal of theocracy, and I have often observed this to be true in the minds of men who, having formed some fantastic idea of a democracy or of a divine government, vent passionate denunciation upon the one or the other. For such denunciations are always based on an ideal of one or the other which they declare too good to be realised. Even those strongly imbued with the belief in paternal government as more than a temporary expedient will not for a moment deny the truth of the old adage, "He that ruleth his spirit is the greatest conqueror"; and thus as the object of paternal education must always be to make men fit to govern themselves, and no one will deny that the man who can govern himself does not need to be ruled and so must have a voice in the corporate government from which he and his children receive good or ill. "There is none good but God" is also a belief that must ultimately lead the reason to advocate equality of outward privilege and opportunity among men; and equality of outward privilege and opportunity among men cannot long be the rule in any community unless a standard of good is set up and held to be sacrosanct, and it is difficult to see how this could differ in any essential respect from divine law.

Our great moralists define the Good as the perfection of conscious life. Before we can see what tends toward perfection we must analyse this idea of perfection and see in what it consists. It

implies, first, consciousness of self—it is better to know that we exist than not to know it. To this we must add health and beauty ; they imply one another, merging into one another. It is better to have a sound, normal, well-proportioned, and abundant life than a life that is unsound and defective or scant. And next we must add to our definition understanding levelled up to the pitch of genius. It is better to have orderly thought, consciously preceding and regulating all that we do, and to have our hours of ennobling insight, rather than to be living and working in a disordered dream or with the imaginative powers always dulled or sleeping. And, again, we must add to our definition fellowship—it is better to co-operate with the life-forces about us than to be at variance with them ; fellowship with the universe of matter and mind is that which smooths the path of the life-force. Let us, then, define perfection as conscious life manifested in health and beauty, and genius and social love.

But although we admit that organic life appears to be a power superior to the powers of inorganic nature, and find the stream of this life as it runs along the generations directed toward what we may call human excellence, we cannot overlook the fact that no indication of such direction can be detected in individual lives, which may or may not exhibit a tendency toward perfection. Health and beauty—physical and moral, intelligence and the power of fellowship, may any or all of them be lacking ; and while many individual lives in each generation feel within themselves the direction of moral forces,

as many, and perhaps more, are sensible of no such trend. We must, then, admit that unless we can regard the single life as persisting to participate in the mature excellence of the whole, we have not gone far toward discovering a purpose in the physical universe worthy to be called divine. The simple fact that death and dissolution are necessary to any divine purpose in life of which we have indication may lead us to the belief that there must be an immortal perfection for the individual, and that, therefore, there must be an immortal good for the whole race, in which each individual has his immortal part.

As we can find little indication of supreme purpose if we confine our attention to individual lives only, it seems to follow that life as a whole is worth much more than the part; that the stream of life is not here to produce the best individual, but every individual is here for the furtherance of excellence in the race. If the trend toward perfection of the race on this planet is not the perfecting of the individual (although the trend toward perfection of many individuals is essential to the perfecting of the race), it follows that the removal from this world of even the most perfect individuals is quite as essential to the ultimate life-purpose as their living in it,— not merely because the physical life of the most perfect must pass to allow of the maturing of the next generation, but because their mental and moral life here is also but a stage, and permanence in it would be detrimental to the purpose.

It would seem, then, that in the divine purpose

a high value is set upon death, and this does not detract from the value assigned to all those forces that make for the fulness of life. We must also recognise that a value is set upon the desuetude of many ideas, as well as upon the vital persistence of others.

CHAPTER V

EMERGENCE OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

As the senses emerge in biological evolution, the psychic qualities connected with them also evolve. By the same process we see man's consciousness of God evolve within his self-consciousness.

Animal sympathy produces altruism—*e.g.* mother and young; dog and master. In the same way human sympathy with God produces susceptibility to divine influence in Holy Writ.

God-consciousness described in Holy Writ in terms of physical consciousness.

No line can be drawn between man's psychic and spiritual powers.

CHAPTER V

EMERGENCE OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

If we consider what we know of the emergence of the physical senses in evolution we shall see that there is a close likeness between this process and the emergence of the self-consciousness and intellectual qualities, and also what we may call the God-consciousness and susceptibility to God's influence.

Let us recall that the eye, for example, begins in a mere thickening of the skin, an effect of light on the nerve centre most sensitive to light. Gradually we have in the skin the lens formed; as gradually the skin in this spot grows transparent, and all the adjustments of the animal eye, all the various functions that protect and nourish it, all its various powers, appear by degrees. In the language, not of the professional physiologist but of the layman, we may describe the eye as connected with a certain part of the brain by the nerve which acts as a conductor of sensation, and these sensations tap, tap, tap upon the brain, exciting it until it is so fashioned that it responds with certain changes in itself to every image that

strikes the eye, and these changes are concomitant with the mental act of seeing. It has not proved possible for us to form any conception of how these changes in the brain are connected with the consciousness of sight; but we know that when the brain is injured in this part there is no correctness of vision. The sense of hearing, the sense of smelling, the sense of touch, the sense of taste, have all emerged in the animal world by the same process; we may call this process sympathy. The skin of the evolving animal feels something that is imparted to it by light and sound or food and fragrance, and the brain feels something that is imparted to it by the organ of sense, and what we call the psychological powers of the higher animals and man are seen to emerge in the precise order and degree in which their organs and brains develop. From one point of view we may say that all the psychic powers of life are called forth by the environment in which the life grows; looking at it in another aspect we may say that organic life has within it the potential psychic ingenuity to adapt itself to its environment or tunnel through to relationship with material environment.

We must not fail to observe that whichever way we look at it, the adaptation is by no means perfect; we can conceive of a much more perfect adjustment between light and vision than the eye presents, between sound and the musical faculty than the ear presents, between the fact of dimension and our sense of touch. Now, one thing that seems to impair the perfect adjustment of

sense and faculty to environment is the development of what we call the higher powers of mind—the power of retaining perceptions and playing with them. The evolving mind seems at a certain stage to begin to gather its perceptions to itself, as a child who, instead of enjoying the sight of flowers as they grow, will begin to pull off their heads and take them into a corner and amuse itself for a long time by making different arrangements of them, dimly beginning, as it were, to analyse and compare, and reconstruct a little garden of its own. So, in some stages, we find the animal mind apparently putting sight perceptions and sound perceptions together, and retaining the memory of them sufficiently to form certain judgments which seem to exceed the mere consciousness of attraction and repulsion. But we do not find that along the line at which this kind of intelligence develops the highest powers of the senses develop. The sense powers of the wild animal or the wild man are more acute and better adapted to their environment than are those of animals and men whose powers of reflection are most highly developed. We used to be told that this was because unnatural ways of living impaired the health; but this does not seem to be the case, as wild animals and men seem to be more delicate, more subject to disease, more short-lived, than their fellows who are born and die among the strong psychic centres of civilization.

Here, then, we see life striving for a new balance of power in the sphere of the sensuous and reflective powers. It is not those that have

the best of either, but those who have the best of both in fittest proportion, who survive, and thus moderation in both respects is for the time a better thing than excellence of either, while certain instances of perfection in either are the promise that later on a higher degree of perfection in physique and in reflective power will be found in combination.

What we call "spiritual life" begins when man turns towards the unseen good the self which at other times he exercises in mundane affairs. And we can see pretty clearly that as wild men begin to do this, the God-consciousness emerges as gradually as in lower generations we see the thickening skin turn into the transparent lens of the eye.

The process, indeed, seems to begin farther back along the line of affection than where it can be noticed. Let us think of the animal at the stage when it is ruled by a succession of conscious states that mean mere attractions and repulsions. Food, drink, warmth, sex, attract; but that is not all, for you get the mother with her brood or litter forgoing food and drink and warmth, if the necessity arise, for the sake of a stronger attraction which cannot be so simply expressed. The protection of the nursling and the gift to it of food and drink and warmth is a complex idea that attracts her so strongly that she will show herself before the huntsman, attracting danger to herself in order to lure him from her nest or lair, and she will go without food to feed her young. She likes to feel them under her wings or sucking

at her breast, and this attraction produces sympathy, and the sympathy causes her to be as conscious of them as she is of herself. She is, in fact, more conscious of their appetites, their helplessness, than of her own. Clearly the one thing grows out of the other; the instinct to feed herself and protect herself endows her with the sympathy that enables her to attribute to her young the need for the same food and protection. The one is quite as certainly a growth from the other as if it were a conscious process. In the stage of maternity she feels as if she were herself the young thing for which she gives herself. We call it altruism, that placing of the centre of interest for the time being out of self and in another.

We see the same thing going on in the dog of whom man makes a companion. The dog is undoubtedly first drawn to his master as a source of supply, attracted first to the hand that feeds him, the touch and the voice that soothes him or excites him with pleasurable anticipation; but companionship on this basis produces a sympathy that later on will cause the dog to forgo all these comforts in order to enjoy the mere consciousness of the master's presence, or to seek for that presence if it be withdrawn, or in some cases of urgency to serve the master as he best may. Dogs have been known to refuse to eat while their masters were suffering grief or pain; this seems to be an even more subtle form of the altruistic self-consciousness, because in such cases the master's presence might be enjoyed, the master's behests

obeyed, while the dog satisfied his appetite in the ordinary way ; but the dog refuses to satisfy his appetite, he ceases to be hungry, in fact, because of some anguish in the master's mind, evidence of which he can only dimly descry and cannot possibly understand.

In primitive religions we find man attracted or repelled by the Unseen according as he attributes to invisible Power the satisfaction or denial of his wants. He begins by endeavouring to please the Unseen in order to attain what he wants. He offers commodities in exchange for gifts. We get every degree between the mere conception of barter between God and man and the ideas of propitiation and adoration. And this traffic with the Unseen produces sympathy, and sympathy deepens till it brings forth the moments when man feels as if he saw and felt from God's centre of consciousness, as if he felt with God and for God more than with and for himself, and we get all the varying conceptions of sacrifice, atonement, and communion by which man endeavours to express and to stimulate those moments in which he seems to cease from himself and live in the consciousness of God ; and later on we get the conceptions expressed in such traditions as that " Enoch walked with God, and was not, for God took him," that " Abraham was the friend of God," and all the later developments of religion along this line with which we are familiar.

We seem to have in all these cases just the same process, and we may say of this process in its highest development, that life is adjusting

itself to the environment of divine Love, or that God is calling forth life into those new forms of consciousness which we call spiritual, and which seem, as far as we can analyse their highest development, to consist both of the habitual recognition of a supreme Good, the desire for which regulates all lesser desires, and the habitual consciousness of a supreme Personality, sympathy with whom regulates all lesser sympathies.

We have in our Scriptures innumerable descriptions of the God-consciousness under the figures of sense perception: "O taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalm xxxiv. 8); "He made of one every nation that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him" (Acts xvii. 27); "Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?" (Deut. iv. 33); "I am undone . . . for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isa. vi. 5), etc. We recognise that this is often the only way in which we can describe any state of consciousness, and that spiritual consciousness is so closely akin to other states of consciousness that we must exercise the same powers in spiritual adventure that we exercise in all intellectual and even physical emprise. All that the religious consciousness implies is that just as man is conscious of self so he is conscious of God. The activities of thought, feeling, and volition that in everyday life have self and the outward world as their object are the selfsame activities which when turned to God or pure spirit as their object we speak of as "spiritual." We

are told that "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth"; but this certainly does not mean that a man must not love God with all his "heart," his "soul," his "strength," and his "mind." Those were the ways of approaching God which, according to St. Mark's Gospel, the Jewish lawyer recited to our Lord, and which our Lord approved. This passage certainly does not favour the superstition of any difference between spiritual and other forms of mental activity except as God is or is not the object.

The developed man is, then, a centre of life, possessing physical powers, self-consciousness, and the intellectual powers, God-consciousness and susceptibility to God's influence, which make him a person by giving him rights and privileges, bodily, social, and Godward. Conceiving God to be supreme spirit, we call man's conscious action in drawing near to, or withdrawing far from God spiritual activity; but if, in using this phraseology, we allow ourselves to suppose that it is possible to draw a line between what we call mental and what we call spiritual, we are passing out of the region of religious evidence into a region of mere speculation, and we seem to be placing an unnecessary strain upon both reason and faith.

We have just reviewed the relation of intellectual to physical development in order to suggest that as they are parts of one process, we have no reason to regard the development of the spiritual power as outside that same process. Just as intellectual power grows out of the power of sensuous percep-

tion—imagination growing out of apperception, and apperception out of mere vision—so does what we call man's spiritual power emerge *pari passu*.

I cannot but think that the religious position is weakened by the loose devotional thinking which recognises in man a threefold division—body, mind or soul, and spirit, and records the "spirit" as the special and more direct gift of God. Let us rather take advantage of the analysis of the modern psychologist, and see in every person a body and an active self which is only manifested in that body, but which faith holds to be capable of living on without the body. This self comprehends and unifies the whole immaterial man. We may call it mind or we may call it spirit, but the important thing is that we should realise that it is not two, but *one self*. Just as religion is degraded when God is conceived of otherwise than as *one* God, so I believe that it is degraded by thinking of the conscious principle in man as other than one. I do not think we can be too clear about this. Just as we believe that the doctrine of the Trinity means that God manifests himself to man as transcendent, as incarnate in time and space, and as immanent in humanity, but as always the One God, so we hold that the self which manifests itself in will, in reason, in emotion, is always the one self. A distinction between mind and spirit may commend itself to many as helpful in face of certain facts, *e.g.* the facts of insanity, which may seem to oblige us to distinguish between the inner and immortal self and the mortal mind. Our difficulty is perhaps

caused by the varying uses of the word "mind." It must be freely admitted that the subjective data of human thought and feeling, the world as conceived by the self, the human methods of acquiring knowledge necessitated by the limitation of our senses—these cannot be of the essence of the self. They condition it, but are not essential to it. Rather than speak of them as an outer self—the mind as opposed to the spirit—I think it more reasonable to regard them as conditions of the human self. They are part of the furniture of our field of consciousness. We might as fitly conceive of a man's acquired knowledge of poetry as part of the power we call his imagination, as call the data of any man's thought and feeling in any sense himself. Thus, the insane can often reason and feel quite normally about the data given them by their deranged sensuous nature. If we saw the world as they see it we should think and feel as they do. The same is probably true in cases of so-called "double" or "multiple" personality. Then we may say that it is the outlook on the world that changes as this or that series of delusions shift into consciousness : one set of ideas infuriates, one soothes, one enamours, and the result on the same ego is to produce a change in the phenomenal self. All that I wish to emphasise here is that the furniture of the mind, or the reaction of the mind upon its furniture, is not the mind itself. I wish to use "mind," "soul," "self," "spirit," when descriptive of human personality as one and all denoting the active self or ego.

CHAPTER VI

UNION OF GOD WITH CREATION

As the line of tendency in evolution passes through intelligence to consciousness of God and the immortal hope, it points to a destiny that is union with God.

Eternal truth can only be apprehended by a variety of analogies.

The idea of union thus considered. Plant and seedling. Animal and offspring. In the union of herd, hive, flock, unity of purpose is added to unity of kind. Greater difference goes with closer union, as in unity of marriage, unity of understanding.

Difference, personality, self-hood are necessary to a high degree of unity. We have no conception of real unity that does not depend on difference.

Four sorts of unity—of kind, of purpose, of feeling, of interpretation. All these exemplified in the brief hour of family life.

But man seeks an abiding union on these lines. Hence—

1. Ancestor-worship—identifying kindred with God.
2. Tribal gods—deifying the corporate purpose.
3. Mystery religions, involving unity of feeling—deifying the intuitions of the race.
4. Philosophies, involving unity of interpretation—deifying intellectual conceptions.

The religion which can satisfy humanity must offer all these sorts of unity in one, and the unity must be between different persons—man and God.

It is this to which nature unconsciously tends. It is this which man consciously seeks. It is in this search that God meets man bestowing re-creative love.

CHAPTER VI

UNION OF GOD WITH CREATION

HAVING pictured the trend of creation evolving as the result of divine purpose, and seen its line of tendency pass through the development of intelligence to consciousness of God and the immortal hope, we seem bound to believe that creation is destined to union with God. As long as this indication, however, remains vague it is of little use to us.

Probably truth—any truth that is, as we say, eternal or a reflection of the divine mind, can only be seen by the common human mind through a variety of analogies ; that is to say, it is not perfectly expressed in any or all of them, but the appeal of each brings the human heart somewhat more into harmony with it.

The idea of two or more in one comes to us first strongly in the thought of heredity. In a sense the seedling is one with the plant which produced the seed. Between animal parents and offspring one gets not only a greater oneness but a greater difference. An animal diverges from its parents in independence of action more

widely than the seedling from the plant, and at the same time we get in the animal a second sort of unity between one and two or more; to what we may call the oneness of heredity is added community of purpose. Certain animals consort together and have community of life. We get the hive, the herd, the flock, the pack. In these communities of feeling and labour, to make one angry is to make all angry; to frighten one is to frighten all; to attract one is to attract all. And in this connection we get also a greater possibility of difference. If one animal in a herd or flock incurs the displeasure of the rest, they will not tolerate its existence; they hunt it to death. Or if there be one ruler of the herd, he will fight to the finish with another who makes pretension to his position.

In human beings we see the oneness of heredity and the oneness of corporate purpose more strongly exemplified. We also get a third degree of union, with a greater degree of difference, between two in the life-long bond of marriage. Some generations farther back, the two who find themselves in perfect unity of life and purpose must have had a common origin in order to possess sufficient oneness for such union, and we find in practice that they must have had different parentage to possess sufficient difference to make them attractive to one another.

To these degrees of union must be added another oneness which we might call the unity of understanding. When two minds in communication with one another give the same interpretation

to any aspect of the universe, they find their mental attitude so coincides that they are said to see "eye to eye," and whatever new thing either sees is an addition to the vision of the other ; whatever one doubts becomes a problem to the other. Here, in friendship, we get perhaps the closest degree of unity of which we can conceive ; that is, if the persons who make component parts of this unity of understanding are such that the will and feeling of each is in harmony with his own understanding, and therefore in harmony with that of his friend.

I think it becomes evident that the reason that these four sorts of unity are closer in humanity than in less complex forms of life is that every human being is first of all a person, a self or spirit, an entity all to himself, first excluding all other beings from himself in order that he may become more perfectly one with them again. A dog cannot have so high a degree of unity with another dog as a man can have with a man, just because a dog can never be so truly separate from another dog as a man from a man. As a mere matter of everyday experience in the facts of common life, we find that we have no conception of real unity between living things that does not depend on difference. That is just where Pantheism fails to interpret and to stimulate life. We have no knowledge of anything but life ; we cannot conceive of anything except in the terms of life ; life involves difference. If the eternal truth cannot be interpreted for us in terms of life it cannot be truth for us.

We have glanced at the conceptions of unity we get in the unity of parent and child, between members of a community, between husband and wife, between friend and friend. What is the essential unity in each of these different unities? Between parents and child we get the closest degree of kinship, unity of kind, and also the closest degree of protection and dependence. In the community we get emphasis on the unity of purpose and activity; in marriage we get emphasis on unity of mature feeling; in friendship on unity of mature reasoning and interpretation of life. We seem only to get the combined unity of kindred, purpose, feeling, and interpretation in the one brief hour of family affection when, in rare cases, there is between the members of one family perfect unity of all these kinds. It is necessarily brief; it is of the essence of family life that it divides into other families.

But we find man seeking in all different stages of religious development a more perfect and more permanent unity, a unity with Divinity which involves a closer bond between the men who share it. In ancestor-worship the grown man seeks to find in the tie between himself and the unseen Divinity a development of the relation between parent and child upon an adult footing, as it were. He offers filial humility and comparative helplessness at the shrine, and seeks to obtain parental protection and wisdom, and his appeal is to the bond of close kindred that lies between them. It is because he is of one substance with his dead that he expects from them such counsel and protection,

and supposes them to desire from him filial virtues ; and in the bond which ties him to his dead he finds a bond which ties his living kindred more closely to him.

In the worship of the tribe we get what seems like a deification of the corporate purpose and corporate activity of the community. Here we find all the rudimentary ideas of sacrifice and communion. The individual must yield his individuality because the community encloses him within the larger and more beneficial corporate life. But the very essence of the corporate life is that it should have one will, that all its activities should contribute to the common purpose. The appeal here is always to the mutuality of activity and purpose. The deity is the God of hosts when the tribe migrates ; when it goes to war, the God of armies, the God of battles ; the God also of the ancestors of the tribe and of contributing tribes ; God of the fathers—of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The appeal is always to the common necessity, and hence to the common purpose. The separate divinities that preside over separate provinces of human activity probably belong to this stage in human effort to find a higher unity which shall combine the joy and utility of the union between child and parent and of that between man and man in tribal or corporate life. When many men are labouring together to sow and reap the harvest of the earth, they worship a deity of harvest. When they seek to navigate the waves or to obtain their wealth from them, they worship a deity of the sea. War, the chase, the effort to fetch metals from the bowels of the

earth—every field of activity in which men labour for a common purpose produces in them this yearning for a higher unity than they find realised among themselves. And probably it is not alone this yearning, but the yearning completed by its satisfaction in the rush of something from the unseen that comes to meet it, that produces the worship of a deity whose name embodies this sense of union.

All the ancient nations had their mythologies. From these emerge the worship of God as outward light, of which the sun is a symbol ; the worship of God as an inward, self-determining self, of which the rhythm of human life, the systole and diastole of human breath, is a symbol. The variations of the one lead men out into beneficent action ; all varieties of the other lead men to cultivate their utmost power of reverie and an indifference to external life. These two conceptions, in their various combinations and differentiations, lead men into larger religious coalitions, in which the demarcations of tribe and occupation are transcended. In these the ceremonies and symbols handed down from family and tribal cults find a new and stronger content. The ceremony is always, as it were, the chalice of communion between man and God, between man and man ; the idea it symbolises and its accompanying emotion, the wine that the chalice holds. We see that as humanity passes through different phases of religion, its conceptions of kingship or leadership grow more and more rich ; and out of them grow conceptions of personal affection and

friendship, and from these we get the worship of God under a new character, in which He cares more perfectly for the welfare of the community as a king cares, more perfectly for individual helplessness as a father cares.

From this it would seem that the highest union that humanity seeks, and the only union that can fulfil and perfect human aspiration, could never be a return to identity of the two or more forming it, and therefore the units composing the unity must be first essentially separate. Hence the highest unity must be a union of persons, because personality is essential separation. Furthermore, this unity between persons must be a union of kind, that is, of common origin; it must be a union of purpose, that is community of goal; it must be a unity of emotion that generates a common life; it must be a union of thought which gives to all things a common interpretation and generates a new, creative imagination. It must be all these in one, and if it is to satisfy seeking humanity, one person of this unity must be greater than man, must approach him from the unseen, toward which he has always looked for the something more than can be realised on earth, and this unseen Personality must be attracting all men, drawing men into a common unity.

Now, we have pictured the beginning of our creation as life coming from God, given by God to itself, so that it should have in itself autonomous activity and duration; and we have pictured to ourselves the creative Intelligence watching over this life which was of His own substance,

never coercing, always fostering, always waiting, setting to its autonomy only the limit that would prevent any loss of the life-force. We have pictured to ourselves the first activities of life in its myriad centres of attraction and repulsion, their separations and combinations, the ceaseless circlings, burnings, and condensings ; and then, here and there, wherever a world might be at the suitable stage, the beginnings of organic life, and all that we know of the evolution of this upon our earth, presuming it to be only one of innumerable variations of worlds of which organic life or lives could be built up. It is, then, clear that in our picture of creation Supreme Generosity must desire always to unite with creation just in so far as the growth and autonomy of any form of life will allow, and that what creation is tending to must be a greater and greater power of union with God ; and as creation on this planet seems to have been tending towards consciousness and then self-consciousness, towards self-direction and then towards free or right self-direction, it must be that, as man becomes more perfectly a self, a person, or, as we sometimes say, a spirit, and as he directs that self more perfectly towards God, he can realise the highest degree of union with the highest other, which is God, and thence the highest kind of union with his fellows.

What seems important to note is that man is never anywhere satisfied with that degree of union with another which he finds obtaining between men and men, and between men and things, apart from religion. The whole of his physical life, the

whole of his rational life, is always liable to be drawn off from the various objects that distract it and summed up in effort after a closer unity. The appetites of the body are efforts to assimilate what is not itself; the efforts of the understanding have the same motive; and what we call man's spiritual nature, that faculty which has developed in him by the exercise of his powers in seeking a response from the unseen, weighs the results of appetite and of knowledge, and finds them wanting. Man feels himself, knows himself, capable of being a party to a more perfect union with what is not himself than earthly affection and knowledge can give, and in one aspect we may say that the search for this constitutes his whole religious history. In another aspect we may believe that while he was yet a great way off, Creative Wisdom ran forth to meet him, so that it is not by desire and by the efforts born of desire alone that he grows, but by the satisfaction of each limited and imperfect human desire for union, by the completion of each human effort born of desire, by the answering care and the re-creative influence of the Creative Love.

CHAPTER VII

NEWNESS OF LIFE

Susceptibility to God's influence develops with the growing God-consciousness.

Illustration—the sea breaking into a new inlet.

Communion of God and man may be described as "telepathic."

Union of man with God does not mean identity. True union depends on community of kind and difference of identity.

We rarely see anything perfect after its kind. Degree of perfection in plants or animals depends on environment. Whatever the general level reached by a class or species, it will respond to an improved environment.

So with the human race. Hence the function of the most God-conscious man must be to better the social environment of his fellows.

To describe this function in another way: the highest human work is creative, and the highest material for this work is conscious autonomous life, and the highest product is a new humanity. The greatest men will, therefore, always be working to create new men and a new human environment.

Thus the greatest men have been founders of world religions which, in proportion to their greatness, transcend local and national barriers.

But while any society is still imperfect, human excellence, which must be God's intention, cannot be perfectly realised in it.

The highest development possible to the individual in an imperfect environment can only be perfection of volition.

When this is attained by the founder of a religion the result must be a society that will transcend all human distinctions.

CHAPTER VII

NEWNESS OF LIFE

We see evidence in various times and places of something that seems quite new entering into human history—a new idea, a new art, a new invention—making a fresh starting-point for human activity. It is the same with what we call animal life and vegetable life ; every new species must have had its starting-point. Life is always new. In a sense this is the commonest of truisms, for every individual organism is different from every other ; but it is also true that the momentum of every fresh starting-point is always pulsing on, rising, gathering force, spreading itself like waves that pass the movement on through water until some larger wave, as it were accidentally, seems to have sufficient power to break down some barrier that till then had been impregnable. The accident is only apparent ; the force was there and growing all the time ; and if the water, after the apparent accident, rushes into some hollow of the shore, making an inland sea that never again recedes, it is not because there was a new force. Yet the inland sea is new.

I think we must regard man's God-conscious life in this way. Under the fostering care of God it is the highest development of creation in this world. And all spiritual activities seem to arise from man's consciousness that when he is most alone, in the sense of having retired within himself from the things of sense, he is in company with another spirit and can have distinct dealings with that other, dealings which we may describe by the new word "telepathic," for that is the only word that expresses the communion of two intelligences without sensuous medium. God must be able to convey something from His own supreme intelligence to man through man's power of thought, otherwise religion were impossible. For man, in any whole or wholesome condition, cannot have a feeling without a concomitant thought, cannot have a religious feeling without concomitant thought. It is evident that if the Supreme Intelligence communicates with man, it must be by such means as thought can interpret, and we know nothing more than this of influences we call telepathic. The self, if it finds God, certainly finds Him within, in the sense that it is within that the self speaks to God and God speaks to the self. This belief is not pantheistic; there is no identity of the self with God. Identity would put an end to all communication, for, as we have seen, all true union depends on difference. The self must be able to say, "God is mine, and not me," otherwise to love God were impossible, or to know Him, or to serve Him freely.

In its highest condition the self must have that

closest union with God which implies the greatest difference — the difference between personalities. For we cannot conceive of this conscious union of God and man without attributing personality to both God and man. We are so made that we cannot conceive of such a union except between persons ; without that we get, not union, but sameness, something that is, indeed, neither human nor divine, but a mere thing which we may call a force or principle.

Now we are assuming that all nature tends to its own perfection, defining perfection as that limit of health, strength, beauty, and wisdom which each organism can reach. We believe that God seeks to draw nature into such perfection. When taking large views which cover long reaches of time and space, we can certainly see tendencies that make for such perfection. Yet we rarely see anything in any grade of being that appears perfect. Very much that we hold to be most picturesque, most lovely, most dear, is so because of its imperfection. How far this may be due to nature's autonomy is a point we must consider later on, but in concrete fact we are forced to perceive that while excellence in individual cases is as conspicuous in one age as in another, the number of instances in which excellence is attained increase as the environment becomes more favourable. *E.g.* the possibilities of an elm tree are not greater than in ages past, but anywhere, given their best environment, they may reach excellence. It is so with any race of animals, and so with man. The human race does not apparently produce finer individuals

as time goes on : Moses, Plato, Shakespeare, were probably as great as our descendants are likely to be, but the race is producing more men able to raise their fellows, and in thus improving the social environment they make it possible for more men in each generation to attain the highest of which they are capable. We should, then, naturally expect that whenever, by some better twisting of the strands of heredity, the human race produces a man more perfect than his fellows, such a man must desire above all things to raise those around him, and to bring about a better social environment for all men.

We can get at this idea also in another way.

The highest type of human activity, that which requires the strongest purpose and the most complete discipline of the whole nature, and that also which produces the best result, is what we have called the work of the artist in life. We obtained this conclusion by examining, first, the work of the mechanic ; secondly, the work of the artist in things ; and, thirdly, the work of the artist in life. Under this last head we had the gardener, the cattle-breeder, the schoolmaster, the parent, and the missionary. We discovered that the higher and more complex the material in which the artistic purpose had to be worked out, the higher were the powers required for working it out. We should, therefore, expect that the more nearly any individual man approached to perfection, the more he would certainly turn his activities in the direction of reproducing his ideals in the humanity around him. Thus, great men might become artists in things ; they would

make new machines, unthought of before, that a mere mechanic might reproduce; they would make new pictures, new statues, new combinations of musical notes, or new combinations of ideas and words. But greater men than these would endeavour always to make new men; the effort of their life would be to produce a new humanity. We consequently see in history that men who have been great teachers, who have founded nations by being great lawgivers, or founded religions by being exemplars of life to a group of disciples, have impressed the world as possessing the highest sort of human power.

Having seen in the preceding chapter that Creative Generosity must always be uniting with creation in so far as creation uses its autonomy to respond to the divine purpose, and having seen that such response draws creation up higher in the scale of life, we now perceive that with men God is able to come into a union closer and ever closer according to the degree of perfection to which they on their side have attained. The perfection of a man's outfit at birth depends upon the twisting together of such strands of human heredity as may bring about the best combination of natural powers. When in any birth a high combination is reached, and such a man partially turns, with such choice as he has, along the lines of God's purpose, his union with the divine must immediately bring forth some noticeably new thing. We see this both in the world of physical organisation and in the world of intellectual ideas. The new thing will be a work of invention or art which will influence

humanity, or a new society in which future generations shall find a new human environment.

In looking over history we see again and again man taking a new social start, as it were, which derives its impetus from some individual founder of the society. The most potent of these societies are religious, and we presume that their founders have come, not only into pre-eminent union with God, as in the case of all genius, but into pre-eminent conscious union with God, which we call religious genius. And among these the greatest have been the starting-point for religious societies which have transcended the distinctions of class and nation. These societies are like the permanent inlet of the sea, first formed by the breaking of some wave-beaten barrier ; the force which formed them has always been part of creation.

But let us go on to ask ourselves what, if we accept the hypothesis of divine purpose, we are forced to think about ultimate perfection. God can purpose nothing less for our universe than perfection of all things in it, each in its perfect environment. It does not, of course, follow that we have the slightest conception of what such perfection would be, and we may feel assured that whatever it be it must be only a starting-point for a new life. We need not confuse our minds with an attempt to conceive the inconceivable, but need only keep before us the fact that the perfection of creation must be the goal of beneficent creative purpose.

Now the perfect environment being necessary for the perfection of any individual thing or person,

it is obvious that individualism, if it goes to the extreme of supposing that the goal God proposes to himself is the individual perfection of this or that thing or person in an imperfect environment, is untenable. The individual is conditioned by the environment, the environment by the individual; that is the basis of all sound church doctrine; it is the basis of all sound sociology; it is the basis of all sound materialism—for within its right limits materialism may be sound; it is the basis of all culture, whether of plant or animal life; it is the basis of all mechanical contrivance. It is only because this is so simple and obvious that we are apt to forget it when we engage high themes. It would be as easy for a machine to work in a temperature which froze the lubricating oil, or for a tropical plant to attain to beauty under open northern skies, as for an average human being to attain to the full stature of humanity in a world of sin and disease. While it is true that the higher we go in the scale of life the wider the range of adaptability, it is also true that the adaptation of the environment has to keep pace with the adaptation of the organism.

Man has triumphed on the earth chiefly because he can adapt his environment to himself better than can any other creature. From the first rude shelter that he built against the north wind and the rain, from the first fire that he lit, from the first trough he made for conducting water, we find him steadily progressing, more and more secure in his conquest of the earth. He has proceeded in the same way in his social relations; and yet the earth

is young, and the human race is young, and untold ages of development lie before humanity, and this earth is but a speck of dust in the physical universe.

But let us now consider whether the highest possible blessedness of the individual life in the process of development may consist only in the perfect use of the will. This must be the task of the next chapter ; all we need here observe is that if any one man should attain to the perfect, God-responding use of his own free-will, the result must be the starting-point of a new religious society which should transcend all human distinctions.

CHAPTER VIII

SON OF MAN

Man everywhere has the inward conviction that he could do right but does not.

On the basis of this conviction all law and justice rest.

It would seem natural that this sense of ability to do right should find realisation.

The man who attained to perfect volition would be the true Son of the race.

If rightness of will involves compassion manward, such an one must sympathise with the shortcoming of his race.

Such rightness of will involves "singleness of eye," which is the way of divine illumination.

Illumination—foresight and insight—are to be had by holding the activities steadily directed to the right.

To this end God gives the universe autonomy, but exercises over it fostering care.

Think of the fostering care of a parent, guardian, lover. Such care can only impart illumination when its object sympathises with its aims.

So Creative Intelligence watches over creation, ever ready to give light to each ready recipient.

As in biological evolution we see physical senses coming to different degrees of perfection, so in human history character evolves. Light is always imparted to the individual as he is able to grasp it.

God will first have full effect on human life when undeviating adherence to right is produced in the human will.

The Incarnation.

Goodness realised reveals lack of goodness in all else. Thus we get the proclamation of the reign of God in contrast to the current world.

CHAPTER VIII

SON OF MAN

Let us again examine human consciousness concerning the possibilities of humanity, remembering that we are picturing to ourselves human consciousness as the highest terrestrial product of autonomous life under the persuasive influence of divine love. Man everywhere, as he ascends in intelligence, is inwardly convinced that he is able to do right. Although it is often possible to argue away instinctive conviction, I think it will be admitted that this is man's instinctive conviction. (The fact that there are men so oppressed with the sense of unrighteousness in themselves and others that they regard unrighteousness as a disease of the race rather than as a voluntary act, hardly impairs the universality of the conviction of which I speak, because the very hypothesis of disease and defect implies a falling short of what ought to be. Disease implies the juxtaposition of a standard of health ; defect implies the juxtaposition of perfection ; the whole point of view involves the recognition of sin as something abnormal over against the normal.) We note that at the same

time man does not believe that he individually is capable of perfect knowledge, perfect wisdom, perfect physique, or, in fact, of any other perfection he can dream of. But it is on the basis of the conviction, that every man is able to hold his will steadily directed to the right as far as he knows it, that the whole fabric of human law and justice has been based from the earliest civilisation until now, while yet the normal man is equally convinced that he does not fulfil his ideal of righteousness.

We need to dwell carefully on this conviction —that the individual man always falls short of the right, which has developed in humanity almost universally and grown stronger with the progress of the race, setting against it the other conviction that it is always possible for man to attain it. It would seem natural, if the race is a living unity, that this conviction should be justified, and that the race in its entirety should at last bring forth one man who should achieve what every other man has believed he could achieve, but did not, viz., rightness of voluntary action. Such a man would be, in the very truest sense, the son of the race in its most normal racial working, the pattern of mankind, the fruit of all effort after right, the vindication of the instinctive belief in its possibility—in the very highest sense, the Son of Man. It further follows that if righteousness consists in compassion manward and love Godward, this Son must take upon himself the shortcomings of His people; for, just because He was all that they could not be, He would perceive in them all that they desired to be and were not, and

would identify Himself with their failures all the more because He did not fail. I am speaking now of the possibilities of humanity only from the human side. Human perfection—the social rounding out of each man's utmost capacity—which terrestrial creation must be tending towards for the fulfilment of a purpose we call divine, must require the perfect environment; but that rightness of the self on the volitional side which men feel they ought to attain, and which we believe the Son of Man did attain, would involve a perfect balance of human powers as directed toward material objects, toward the world of ideas, and toward the world of personalities, and it would also induce a new illumination. We find this sense of rightness in our Lord, and this illumination.

Let us dwell for a moment on the conception involved in the words, "If thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light." We may paraphrase it by saying that in any province of life in which our activities run, the disinterested purpose to serve only the behests of rightness is the path of illumination. By "path" we here mean the path of activity along which the conscious mind travels. Autonomous activity and duration are of the essence of the self, and the steadfast will to hold the activity true to the right is the method by which we seek illumination. The right has different names according to the field of activity. In the field of philosophy it is abstract truth; in the field of morality it is the ideal social state; in the field of art it is beauty; in the field of organic life it is health. These a man feels he

ought unswervingly to will and work for, however the imperfection of his environment hinder success.

Illumination—which we can describe as foresight and insight, the mental grasp of things which not only sets experience in right proportion, but fetches from the unseen that additional truth needed for the particular salvation that the world then and there needs — this illumination is to be had by holding the activities steadily directed to the right and the right only. It goes without saying that, as in the evolution of our world we can detect a divine purpose directed to that balance of faculties which we call human, we must believe that this purpose is further tending to this singleness of eye and fulness of light. In other words, the aim we can detect in all early biological evolution must point to human illumination, which is union with God. Now, we have already pictured to ourselves God, as the supreme force of intelligence and generosity, giving to this universe in its first formless and potential condition His own autonomy and duration. We believe that God exercised over this autonomy, not the kind of purpose with which we coerce matter, not the rude force with which we warp life, but that highest sort of purpose that is directed to fostering autonomous intelligence.

We have seen that, as far as we know such purpose—for example, in a parent or lover or teacher—the personality exercising this fostering care can impart such illumination as he has to give only when the younger or less developed personality which he is fostering has the "single

eye," that is, the steadfast will toward that which both child and parent, lover and beloved, teacher and taught, hold to be right. It would therefore seem that the Supreme Goodness in its terrestrial purpose must have watched over all the development of earthly life, never coercing, always fostering, watched for the emergence of that balance of powers and that rightness of will which could receive the highest illumination of which earth was capable.

Just as in long biological evolution we can see the physical senses coming to different degrees of perfection—here, in this creature, the lens of the eye became transparent; there, in that form of life, it developed adjustment of focusing power; here the ear was first able to detect the greatest range of vibrations; and from each of these points the animal race goes on into fuller life—so in human history we see here and there, in different times and nations, characters whose activities are so steadfastly directly toward right in one or many fields of activity, that they become centres of illumination, and from each of these lives humanity goes on into fuller life. We call such men inventors, poets, artists, lawgivers, philosophers, founders of religions. We are bound to believe that God would impart to each one of these all the light that each was able to grasp. There are many thousands of intelligent people who believe that Jesus Christ was able to direct not some but all His activities aright. Assuming this, we should expect a new life from Him. Just as when the eye or ear first came to its fullest perfection,

light and colour would at once produce their best effect on the human brain, so when undeviating adherence to right is first produced in the human will, God would first have His full effect upon human life.

In this way I think we may figure to ourselves what we call the Incarnation on its earthly side. We can see that the realisation of an ideal must make manifest the lack of realisation on all sides. Thus with the Incarnation we have the proclamation of the perfect reign of God in contrast to the current world.

CHAPTER IX

SON OF GOD

The universal conviction that man can do right but does not, makes it reasonable to expect that a man should some time appear who does right.

But goodness cannot be achieved by individual effort alone; it must be also the gift of destiny, *i.e.* predestination.

Individual man, personal though he be, is indivisible from the stream of life.

Man is thus born into a scheme of things which, if free-will and the sense of sin be realities, as we believe, is not perfectly adjusted to God's will. While it is probable that what works against God's will is self-destructive, which limits possible extent of discord, such discord when personal may be the diabolic element which, as well as the divine, environs the spirit of man.

It is certain that every child chooses between ideals determined by forces other than itself.

Every individual is partly made, and wholly environed, by forces other than himself.

This undoubted truth underlay the ancient stories of the divine or regal descent of every great man.

In the Hebrew poem of creation all life originates from the brooding of the Spirit; and Hebrew prophets looked forward to the perfecting of human polity as an act of God, cosmology and eschatology thus alike figuring forth the truth that all that is good is of God.

Again, if we take the "fruits of the Spirit" and their opposite, as described by St. Paul, we see that only in a community or family where the fruits exist and their opposites are absent, can the best sort of child be born.

Whether, then, the doctrine of the divine Fatherhood of Jesus be fact, or only a poetic representation of fact, the idea it symbolises is still true.

If the Incarnation was the culmination of the world-process, it could only be the beginning of a saving life; further, that life, if truly human, must go on to develop in the heavens. For true humanity implies much more than a body in human shape inhabited by Divinity; it involves a personal immortality.

This asserted in the Pauline doctrine of the resurrection and mediation of Christ.

The Church now admits she has mistaken crisis for process in her doctrine of the first, and also of the last, things. The Church may also have mistaken crisis for process in her account of the Advent of Christ.

But he who sees truth and mistakes its form lives more wisely than he who fails entirely to see it.

Sun, photosphere, and sunbeam suggested as an analogy for the doctrine of the Trinity.

CHAPTER IX

SON OF GOD

We have been seeking to realise that perfect rightness of conscious endeavour must bring man into complete union with God, and that, therefore, when we find in history a man who is proclaimed righteous, and who also asserts his union with God, there is a presumption that we are dealing with fact, not myth. But our minds ought not for a moment to rest in the idea that union with God depends only on conscious ethical achievement. Every man comes into the world with an outfit of body and mind which conditions his ethical life; but more potent, probably, than heredity is early influence. Physique, temperament, experience — these act and interact upon one another, combining to evoke from a thousand inherited possibilities that subtle thing we call character. To narrow down our conception of character to the result of personal moral effort makes it a shallow notion. The present writer knew two sisters, born of the same parents, reared in the same nursery, equally intellectual, one of whom lavished more tender sympathy on a

plant or a bird or any human wayfarer than the other showed to her own offspring. We have all seen such differences. The man or woman born lean of nature must exercise great moral effort and a strong passion of prayer and faith in order to attain to the depth and beauty of character with which the richly endowed heart is born.

We can never get away from the facts that, at different times and places, have been expressed by a belief in fate, or in "election," or the belief in initiatory magical rites. Whether we can read it or not, a large share of a man's destiny, both in this world and in the immortal life, is sealed upon his forehead in infancy. A certain power of choice is his, and tremendous issues hang upon the use he makes of it; but, at the best, character depends on instruction, example, and opportunity. It is true that as we sow acts we reap a habit, as we sow habits we reap character, not only our own character but that of others. The moral endeavour made by the individual, the moral vision which guides his endeavour, is due quite as much to the community which produces him, the home in which he is reared, as to himself. Even in the point where he is most individual, the point where individual conscience and individual free-will join hands, man is not merely individual. He is part of the humanity of the past, and in his individual life he cannot make a choice, put forth an idea, make a friendship or beget a child, without altering in some degree the nature and environment of the humanity of the future. M. Bergson has been helping us to realise very vividly that

in all life, as we know it, there is no stopping-place, no pause. From the beginning of the universe until now creation is life, and life is as a river pouring forth and for ever pouring forth. The whole of terrestrial existence is one with universal existence. The whole of terrestrial life, from the first embryo until now, and as long as it may last, is indivisible. And the individual man, person though he be, is indivisible from the stream of life.

Yet to each generation, and to each individual, is given the supreme honour of giving to the race its future environment, choosing within certain limits what that future shall be. If our wills are free, if the animals about us have any power to do or not to do, if God would have freemen and not slaves, if there be any truth in our conclusion that creation is life and life is autonomous, we may be quite sure that the condition of the world into which any man is born is not entirely according to God's will. Our sense of wrong testifies that life has deviated from God's will more or less.

Although we may believe that those ways amongst which creation could exercise choice must be ordained by the Creator who gave freedom, as the ideals between which any little child must choose are provided by family circumstances; although we must assume that the attraction of Creative Love or spiritual organisation must ultimately prove the greatest attraction, and the repulsion of spiritual disintegration or the defiance of Creative Love the greatest repulsion; although

we believe in the law of the conservation of life-energy and the splendid goal to which it moves, this faith does not contradict the belief that it is possible for life, when it has attained even to the complex height of self-conscious choice, to fall back into lower forms. If individual spirit is immortal so far as to be independent of the death of the body, it probably endures through vaster processes before it can fall back into the condition of the latent life-force.

Now, if this be the case, and if all terrestrial life be one, and every part of life have more or less influence upon the whole, we can discover, in the persistence of spirits which continue in the lower choice, what must be a diabolic element in human life. Thus we may think of individual man on earth as under the attraction, not only of divine Love, but of all those human spirits, in this life and beyond, that have gravitated as it were toward divine Love, and also under the influence of all those spirits which, in this life and beyond, in defiance of divine Love, are sweeping backwards to lose themselves again where the river of life flows in its more elemental condition, and in their sweep exercising their own power of attraction, their own infernal telepathic suction, upon the sons of earth and, for aught we know, upon the immortal whole of humanity.

It is reasonable to suppose that the influence of both these forces is felt, consciously or unconsciously, by every man ; but the degree of his consciousness of them and of their difference, his natural affinity with one or the other, is determined

for him. Here, then, we have every individual upon earth partly made and wholly environed by forces other than himself.

It is this great and undoubted fact that in the ancient world caused the tradition of every man of remarkable power to be accompanied by some story which would adequately account for his pre-natal superiority. Such a child is said to be a heavenly foundling, or his earthly mother is pictured as united to a god or demi-god, or he comes of some great dynasty, with divine father-hood farther back. The literature of the ancient world teems with such stories, and they represented a vital truth. The early Church, pushing its way among civilised and half-civilised races, found them everywhere. It was by a universal as well as true instinct that Christians claimed for their Master not only union with God, but divine descent, and later added to that the humble innocence and regal dignity of His earthly mother. While there is much modern discussion as to whether the doctrine of the Virgin Birth is founded upon a mistaken or a true tradition, it is helpful to realise how great a truth lies outside the range of this controversy. If creation be divine in its origin, not only does every terrestrial life come to birth by a divinely appointed process, but individual greatness must always be the result of something in the pre-natal circumstances that may be truly described as special union with the Creative Spirit. The preparation for a life of unique goodness must have been unique volitional union with God.

If we go back to the Hebrew version of one of the great poems of creation—that in the first chapter of our Bible, we find God represented as ordaining that every species should be organised with its seed "in itself"; and when that is brought forth God is represented as rejoicing over it, saying that it is "good." It is impossible to read the whole passage without seeing that in this author's mind the beauty of terrestrial creation consisted in the "breeding true" of each species of organic life, and that to his mind this was the result of the brooding of the Spirit of God upon terrestrial creation. We moderns cannot believe in creative purpose at all without perceiving how true and powerful is the insight of the great poet. But to him the whole process of creative evolution was foreshortened; he looked backward and saw its facts as we see a telescope through which we look, as ring and lens only when it is, in fact, a long series of tubes and lenses. When we come to the later Hebrew prophets, we find them looking at the creative purpose, not in the past but in the future; and again they see God in action, bringing forth good out of good and evil out of evil; but again they see the whole series of events as one event, the whole process of development as a crisis of salvation. Indeed, the human mind's eye requires long training before it can estimate distance or take any note of all that lies between it and the object of attention. The human race for long centuries always saw what it thought to be intensely real as immediately before it, just as the individual infant will stretch out its hand to grasp

the rising moon; and the dominating instinct of the religious consciousness, whether it looked forward or backward, was that God willed orderly perfection, that both in the glorious construction of the universe and in its glorious culmination God was specially active; in other words, that what was good was of God, and what was specially good was specially of God.

Let us take this instinctive thought of the religious mind and apply it to those forces which bring forth our greatest men. The stock of which the child comes, the physical condition in which the life-force has been transmitted through generations, the thoughts and ideas which have been inseparably acting and reacting upon that physical condition, the little world of ideas and circumstances which form the environment of the tender life before it has power to mould itself,—all these are the father of the child in the same sense in which the child is father of the man.

If we turn to St. Paul's contrast between the carnal or world-regarding life and the life generated by the Spirit, we get the clue to the conditions which bring forth greatness. There is, no doubt, a certain sort of greatness, ill-balanced, turbulent, and in certain dramatic settings most impressive and heroic, which is brought forth by passion and strife, but we cannot doubt that the best balance of human powers, the true serenity and majesty of the highest humanity, has its inheritance in "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance." If we doubt this let us turn to the

vices St. Paul lists as the opposites of these virtues, and we shall at once see that they do not tend to fulness of life. Whenever these virtues are pre-eminently present, can we question that the child born of them and to them is pre-eminently "born of God"? If, then, we find in history a character which in a unique sense "cannot commit sin," He must be above all others the most direct result of God's creative will, of the brooding or over-shadowing of the Spirit which is God Most High.

Whether, then, the story of the Virgin Birth relate fact or relate a poetic interpretation of truth, the idea it expresses is still true. If our whole hypothesis of creative purpose represent reality, if the Creator always unites with His free creation just in so far as the creature's autonomy is used aright; in the creative process going on through all the ages, whenever and wherever creation is at its best, there the creative purpose of the Most High is specially at work. And this special creative action must generate the life of great and good men just as truly as it upholds them all their lives. If we believe our Lord to have been the perfect will of humanity, the completed type of free-will—the will that all moral men had sought to exercise and could not, we must know that He could have come of no ordinary earthly stock, and that His life was pre-eminently generated, as it was pre-eminently upheld, by the power of the Most High.

The transcendent truth of the divine Sonship is that creation was with God from all time, came from God, is in part turning of its own will toward God,

is in part ever turning more and more consciously toward Him, and becomes at last completely, self-consciously, at one with God in will. But what we have just spoken of as an end is equally a beginning, there being, indeed, no end that is not a beginning in eternal progress. This is the secret power of all eschatologies. We have been thinking of the Incarnation as the culmination of a world-process; it is also a beginning. The religious consciousness of mankind has always recognised that self-conscious union with God means that its subject becomes a Saviour because God is our salvation. The subject possessed by God could only be actuated by one motive—the desire to bring the rest of creation into His own blessedness, to give to them a perfect environment in which each may rise to his own perfection. If we believe in human immortality we must believe that even the most perfect form of terrestrial life held but in germ the possibilities of immortal human personality. Therefore the one human life which entered into perfect union with God here must in the beyond display an unending development of that union, an unending development of the power to save.

Have you seen the sequoia trees of California? There, in some sheltered valley, stand groves of trees whose years are counted by thousands, and whose height would far overtop the towers of Canterbury or York. In one such grove, where a space has been cleared so that one can look up and around, it is possible to see the gigantic brotherhood as they magnificently rise into the

gulf of blue. The eye may single out the majestic form of one unblemished tree; the bole is a mighty tower; the lower branches, dark and rugged, are interlocked with its dark fellows in their own impenetrable twilight; but far above, some indefinable height above the shadows of the grove, the upper part towers splendid in the sunshine, looking as young and strong and perfect as if God had made it with a word but yesterday. Before Rome was great this tree and all its possibilities were contained in a tiny germ. Any malformation of that seed, any weakening of that seed, would have made the symmetry and size of the tree for ever impossible. A tree it might still have been, to some extent puny, stunted, or lopsided, not this glorious creation, this splendid degree of correspondence to the thought of God.

This significance of the germ is wrapped in all the teaching of our Lord. His teaching concerning "eternal life" constantly suggests that what is done here will have effect in its result on all future ages through which the individual spirit must pass. Now, this development from germ is a very essential part of our humanity; it is difficult to conceive of any life being truly human that does not participate in it. The significance of the germ is wrapped also in all the processes of terrestrial life; a human life perfect in this stage would afterwards naturally become more and more powerful and glorious. The divine Son upon earth must continue to be in further regions of spirit what He was potentially on earth. This is asserted in the Pauline doctrine

of the resurrection and mediation of Christ. "If Christ be not raised your faith is vain." "So in Christ shall all be made alive." "Christ the firstfruits, then they that are Christ's." "He shall deliver up the kingdom to God." "That God may be all in all" (1 Cor. xv.).

Humanity seems to imply both a human body and a human soul. The human body itself is evolved by the action and interaction of the developing soul latent in all terrestrial creation with the instinctive life and the material life of earth. It was thus certainly that "a body" was "prepared" for the Christ. But it is equally true that in all this process of a free creation turning voluntarily Godward, this process that prepared the body — the developing of the human spirit which is quite inseparable from the preparing of the body—the Creator must, like the father in our Lord's parable, have hastened to meet, with regenerative love, all approach of creation while it was yet "a long way off" from conscious freedom or conscious sonship. Thus God's evolutionary process worked until the Mother of the Christ and the Christ Himself came.

We are ready, all of us, to admit that the religious consciousness of the race—or, we may say, the religious consciousness of the Church—has seen as a crisis what is really a process when it looked into the past and spoke of creative evolution as "six days of the Lord," when it looked forward and spoke of continued evolution as "the day of the Lord." Is it not possible that, in speaking of the process of the advent of the Christ, the

religious consciousness may again have mistaken crisis for process? But in admitting these mistakes, if they be admitted, we are bound always to admit that the truth they clothe was no mistake.

That mariner who, sighting a real object in a sun-pervaded mist, sees the real outline blended with some preconceived image of his own mind, steers far more truly than he who sees nothing. If there be eternal truth behind any form of doctrine, he who sees it in that form lives more wisely than he who fails to see it at all.

There can be no logical or scientific proof that the union of human volition with the divine came to its culmination in Jesus Christ. No argument for it will convince the mind that does not feel the appeal of the risen Christ. All that I urge is that for those who do feel that appeal there is nothing irrational in not only holding the eternal truth of the divinity of Jesus, but in holding it in spite of changing conceptions of its outward form.

If there be a God, and if we be His understanding creatures, the inner truth of what we call the doctrine of the Trinity cannot be questioned. The unthinkable Creator is hidden from us by the medium through which we see and feel His power. The medium may be abstract or concrete; if concrete, it may be a thing or a person. The extent of a man's knowledge of God depends on the adequacy of the medium to reveal Him. This is as true for primitive savage or learned sceptic as for the Christian. If the savage sees God in the wind, it is in so far as the power of the Creator is really in the wind that it reveals Him to the

savage. If the savant sees God in an abstract idea, in so far as the power of God is in the idea it reveals Him to the savant. If the Christian sees God most adequately revealed in a Person, ever-living, ever-loving, ever-active toward us, his Godward vision is not more indirect than that of any other thinking or unthinking man. In so far as any man is conscious of divine influence this influence must proceed from God, not merely through the medium, but from God's union with the medium. It is, as it meets the consciousness, truly God; just as the beam of sunlight that falls on us is truly sun, though we only see the photosphere. Beam, photosphere, and sun may be taken as an analogy for the doctrine of the Trinity. Both beam and photosphere are in their nature very sun of very sun. How little we know of the sun science tells us; but we have good reason to believe that if the photosphere were removed, we could not look upon the sun and live.

CHAPTER X

OMNIPOTENCE

The simplest idea of omnipotence is analogous to the power of an adult over a little child.

This power may be analysed into three sorts in an ascending scale—

1. Power to change the place of matter, *i.e.*, to move the child's body.
2. Power to influence the child's behaviour.
3. Power to conceive of the effect desired.

The effect desired may be (*a*) mere acquiescence; or (*b*) intelligent acquiescence; or (*c*) a good balance of spontaneity and acquiescence.

Power may also be reckoned quantitatively. The power that lasts longest and extends over the greatest range is the greatest degree of power.

Government by force can belong only to the infancy of the child or of the race.

A clear conception of a strong character to be moulded, and self-restraint in the process of evoking it, mark the highest degree of power in the adult over a child.

If to this were added the power to create the child, we should get the complete notion of creative and administrative power which we associate with omnipotence.

To get our simplest conception of creation let us imagine a gardener creating a rose. He must exhibit, first, power to conceive the rose character. His conception must extend to all possible varieties of the rose life.

At the same time to form the conception is to set its limits.

These limits are two-fold—the outward and visible possibilities, and the character of the inner secret life.

If we attribute to such a life any power of self-direction, it follows that the creator-gardener cannot know which possibility will develop and which will fail. His power, after creation, will be of the same nature as that of the adult over the child.

In both cases higher power is strictly regulated in relation to inferior power, its secret being the ability to conceive an end and regulate action toward that end.

Hence this must be our conception of Omnipotence.

The creation of the finite must therefore involve the self-regulation of the Infinite.

If so, how can we assume we understand the degree of self-limitation.

If the end Omnipotence has in view is a form of created life able to freely

co-operate with Him, that would seem to involve limiting Himself so far as to give the ability to resist Him.

This resistance in lower nature would mean disease and degeneration; in higher nature, these together with moral disease and moral degeneration.

But it is only the possibility of resistance, not resistance itself, that can be said to be necessary.

We cannot conceive of Omnipotence as able to have all things that seem to us good. Foreknowledge appears to us good, but the supreme good appears to us to be the hope of something better than we have ever experienced.

We cannot conceive God as both having all things at once and as having this supreme joy of expectation. We should remember this when inclined to dogmatise as to what Omnipotence must or must not include.

It appears, however, to require a greater degree of power to create a living existence whose successive attainments would be an ever-varying and glad surprise to the Creative Mind than to create a passive thing whose career would be from the beginning static to the Creative Mind.

The Christian will here remember that our Lord represented God as a Father, and thus gave His authority to the idea that God's happiness is concerned in the choices that men make.

The responsibility felt by the best parents for the careers of their children is something that perhaps comes as near to touching the great Reality as anything we know.

If so, God's prescience must extend to all possibilities of disaster, and against the results of all possible disaster He must provide.

God's re-creating influence on His creatures must be unceasing though not coercive.

CHAPTER X

OMNIPOTENCE

LET us try to get at what we may hold to be the best symbol of omnipotence by considering first, and ascending from, the simplest type of power we know.

Most of us have in the back of our minds crude ideas of power gained in the earlier years of the race or the individual. We are apt to have a vague idea that omnipotence exercised toward humanity would be like a nurse who can lift the body of a child from one place in a room to another, place it in a sunny window or dark closet, and give it a smile or a frown, a shake or a cake, to mould its behaviour. Well, let us analyse this idea! Let us take a nurse training a child, and analyse her conduct. She shows three sorts of power in an ascending scale: first, the power to change the place of matter, which can equally well be applied to any sort of matter; second, the power to adjust her conduct to the moulding of the child's behaviour; third, the power to conceive of the effect to be thus produced. The first might be exercised by the wind on an autumn leaf, or

by steam on an engine. The second seems to be instinctively exercised by many animals toward their young. The third can only be imagined as rudimentary in the more intelligent animals; it is to be clearly observed only in man.

Again, let us consider what is involved in the power of the nurse to conceive how she wants the child to behave. She might wish to produce in the child—(1) feeble conduct, *e.g.* such conduct as is produced by soothing syrup; (2) intelligent orderliness without spontaneity, *i.e.* order without freedom; or (3) she might wish to produce a good balance of spontaneity and obedience. The nature of the nurse's concept of her aim measures her potency—a momentary amount of power is not so great as the same amount that endures. The nurse must so act at any one moment as to ensure enduring control of the child. Her forecast of the behaviour she demands must be adjusted to the endurance of her power. Again, she may aim at influence over the future of humanity. Then the degree of power to be realised in the future man whom she has nursed, and who continues to be ruled by the precepts she has instilled, will be part of her concept. It is obvious that a nurse who has longest control over the most forceful nature has a greater degree of power than one whose control is of shorter duration or who influences a weaker character. The course of action which will ensure the greatest field for her influence for the longest period must be precisely adapted, first, to the universal child in whom her charge

participates ; secondly, to the temperament of her particular charge.

Now, the government of the universal child is the whole problem that humanity has been working at in civilisation, and, broadly speaking, the attempts have diverged into two types : the one in which emphasis is given to controlling the mind by the body, *i.e.* government by physical force or by the fear of physical injury ; the other in which emphasis is given to controlling the body by the mind, *i.e.* government by consent. These often merge into one another : a wife beaten by her husband may prefer his rule to independence ; the Hindus of India are said to prefer to be coerced by Britain rather than run the risk of subjection to the Mahommedans. But it is evident that in the main these two types of government diverge, and that government by consent has been found to be the more stable of the two. For although habit may be formed by force and endure for a time, habit remains external to the true nature unless it obtain inward consent.

If, then, to return to nurse and child, the question is whether any nurse can control any child longest by consent or by fear, by influencing his mind through his body or his body through his mind, we should all admit that the first means of control must stop with childhood, the second may go on through life. Although it is true that a shock or a whipping might bear fruit in mature life, and so might undue indulgence, neither would tend to a continuance of deference and respect to the nurse unless there was an

inward consent to them as both necessary and salutary.

In dealing with the child, then, power in the nurse lies in the ability to conceive at any moment of such behaviour to be produced in the child as will realise in him the strongest character with the greatest deference for the precepts she would instil. Next, she must so adjust her action as to produce that behaviour. The physical ability to move the child from one place to another, to punish or reward it, only indicates power to effect her purpose when it is used in absolute subordination to her inner conception of the character she wishes to mould.

Thus we have seen that the power which a nurse exhibits in capricious action is a low degree of power, and her ability to influence the after life of humanity through her charge is a higher degree of power. The nurse acts always as architect or artist on material provided for the exercise of her power. If to this power to build up could be added the power to create the material on which she works, it is clear that we should have a still higher degree of power, of which we have no experience.

It is this creative power, as well as administrative power, that we always associate with Omnipotence ; and we conceive of Omnipotence as bringing forth the whole complexity of things. In this association the idea of creation baffles our analysis ; but let us consider what our simplest idea of creative power would be.

Consider what creative power might be in a gardener if he could for once exceed his function

as guardian and educator of the life of vegetation and become its author. To simplify the case as much as possible, let us imagine him alone in space and time creating a hitherto-unthought-of thing. His first action must be to form a new conception; let us suppose that conception be of what we now call a rose. The conception must include the rosebush which bears the flower. But if he conceive the new flower as possessing always the same group of characteristics—every rose the replica of every other—it is evident that would be a meagre conception compared with a conception that, with fundamental similarities of structure, admitted many varieties in size, form, scent, colour, etc., all good and beautiful.

It is clear that the creative intelligence of the gardener must first conceive the rose-life, and that to form that conception is to set its limits. The rose-character is a definite thing, and every healthy and beautiful form into which the rose-life might develop without losing its own definite character might be called perfect. Degree of possible perfection, and possible variety of perfection, would be limited by character.

It is probable that not only must its character be definite, but its proper power. For simplicity we are trying to do what is, of course, impossible —to conceive of rose-life as unrelated to anything but the thought of the gardener-creator. Even so experience teaches us that there must be a limit to the possible size and quantity of any variety if beauty is to be always realised. We constantly recognise the fact that increase of size or number

in beautiful objects disappoints the expectation of beauty. There are few things more beautiful in form than a calla lily against its own leaf, or a few of them grouped in their foliage; but a hedge or field of calla lilies strikes one as merely a coarse form of vegetation, because the beauty lying in the form of the individual flower is wholly lost in profusion. Groups of flowering azaleas are very beautiful on the hillsides of the English Lake district; but if we go to the hillsides of North Carolina, where mountains and valleys and plains are all on a much larger scale, tracts of flowering azaleas which may be measured by the mile rather than the yard are much less beautiful. Such great masses of colour, in which light and shade are indistinguishably blended, weary the eye. It may be urged that if we were larger and our eyes stronger we should prefer our beautiful objects of larger size and in larger quantity; all we can reply is that, with our capacities and powers limited as they are, it does not follow in our experience that because a thing is good it would be better if it were larger or if there were more of it. The monsters of the slime gave place to creatures very like them in character, but smaller and more effective; the decrease in bulk was not a retrogression. And the same sort of considerations may be applied to prove the necessary limitation of variation in the other variable characteristics. We may assume, then, that perfection of rose-life would be limited in size and quantity, in form, smell, and colour, by its own character, *i.e.* by the concept of the creator.

So far we have been considering how the rose-life is limited by the necessity of conforming to certain outward conditions; let us now consider how it is limited in the secret of its being, limited by the conception of a double-stranded force which reproduces itself, by matings and by separation, in innumerable strands, which, crossing and recrossing, may develop these different possibilities. I do not here enter into the problem of whether we can conceive how a rose-life can be self-directing. Great as are the difficulties of the conception, I think it is still more difficult to think why the concept, which is real, should be translated into the concrete at all if some experience has not to be worked out in the concrete which was not in the concept. I want to assume, for this illustration of power, that the rose-life possesses a self-directing force as we believe our own life to have. If at any point, then, and in any degree, it has the choice of how it will cross and recross, or whether it will develop or fail, such amount of self-direction must mean that the creator of roses does not know which of all the possible forms of perfection will develop and which will fail. Failure might mean the final loss of certain possibilities of excellence; it might mean that when these flickered out the rose energy in them began again to develop in some other rose stock; but it is certain that the concept of self-directing life means the concept of possible failure and the concept of the possible amount of that failure. The concept of rose-life must then include the utmost possibility of definite perfection of character and the utmost possibility of

failure. It must also include the conditions of its life—the best of these, and the least good, in which it could live.

When the concept was translated into the concrete, would the gardener's act of creation be finished? If the action of the rose-life were all determined beforehand its creation would then be finished; if not, much more would be required to bring about the utmost degree of excellence in the shortest time. If what animated the creator of roses was a desire for roses, good gardening must be resorted to. Power, then, in a creator of roses would admit the same analysis as we have applied to power in a nurse.

But how far does analysis in both these cases lead us from the notion that a more powerful being is, in relation to inferior degrees of power, unregulated! In our experience the secret of power lies in the ability to conceive the end in view and to regulate action toward that end; and our conception of Omnipotence can only be modelled upon what we know of finite power, although not limited by it.

If we go back to the ancient idea of creative power as applied to human spirits, we shall find that the same thing holds true, although that idea was greatly influenced by static conceptions of nature. In St. Paul's picture of the potter at his wheel turning vessels, as a symbol of God turning out human lives, the thought of racial life as a spontaneous, self-directing, changeful, ever-developing force, is absent. If we dwell on the figure of the potter we are obliged to believe that

the spontaneity of racial life is the great delusion, that humanity in its relation to God is a mere thing. But in this figure, as in my figures, God is working to a definite, preconceived end which must regulate His action.

The creation of the finite must therefore mean the self-regulation of the Infinite. The power that flows into the creating even of a static universe must rest upon the self-limitation of God's thought as a basis. The power that flows into the culture of a growing universe must mean further self-regulation.

If, then, we cannot conceive of creation without self-limitation of the Creator, why should we set a bound to that limitation? If that which God has chosen to create is not a passive thing, as is clay in the hands of the potter, but a life that has a way of its own, why may we not conceive that within limits that life is not moulded by God's will, but has the power of co-operating with His will, or of partially separating from it and thus failing? Why should we not believe that it is only the possibility of evil, never its actuality, that is necessary? If the end which Omnipotence has in view is a form of life produced by the ability to co-operate with or resist Him, it must be part of His omnipotence to be able to give the ability to resist Him. This resistance, if it took place, would be evil—in lower nature, disease and degeneration; in higher nature, these together with moral disease and moral degeneration. The Creator must be responsible for willing the possibility of evil; but while it does not lessen His

responsibility for evil to believe that life resists His will, it enables us to regard God as permitting what is against His own desire or will, what is, in fact, unnecessary.

It is quite impossible, however we may wish to do it, for us to conceive of an Omnipotence that can do, or can have, all things that seem to us good. Few things seem to us more desirable than insight into the way in which, as we say, things are going to work. A forecast of the future, into which our own action can be so dovetailed as to ensure its success, seems to us very desirable, although it is possible that the great joy of success lies in just that small element of uncertainty that gives a plan laid by the clearest insight a flavour of risk. In any case we should admit that if we were able to know more perfectly the end of actions from the beginning a great deal of failure and misery could be avoided, even if the corresponding excitement of joy had to be forgone ; we therefore think that complete foreknowledge must be characteristic of Omnipotence.

Again, there is nothing that seems to us more desirable than the something better than we have ever experienced, which is at bottom the object of all our hopes and all our efforts—in the garden a new hybrid, in travel a new country to discover, in physics a new element or a new law, in art a new creation, in religion a fresh inspiration. Now, it is quite clear that if God has prescience of all things He can never have this which seems to us the supreme joy.

All this must show us how entirely inadequate

our highest conception of Omnipotence must be, and so dogmatism as to what it includes is out of place. We can only make such provisional interpretations of the idea as may seem least inadequate, and for my own part I can only say that it seems to me it would require a greater degree of power to create a living existence whose successive attainments—each attainment rescued out of possible failure—would be an ever-varying and glad surprise to the Creative Mind than merely to create a passive thing, however perfect, whose career would be all foreseen, and therefore from the beginning static in the Creative Mind. The Christian will see the bearing of our Lord's representation of God as a Father on this problem.

The difficulties of either conception are very great, and I would not venture to urge the consideration that makes life and freedom seem more real and less delusive, were it not that it seems to me that the idea of our future as not yet existing anywhere, even in the mind of God, gives the highest moral inspiration to life. When our Lord speaks of the joy in heaven over one sinner that repents, He certainly seems to offer as an inducement to the missionary life the belief that something new is added to the joy of God with each product of the missionary's labour.

It has been argued that our pleasure in seeing a great drama reproduced or in reading a great poem is not lessened but enhanced by the fact that we have seen the drama or read the poem before. That is quite true, but, I think, only in so far as our foreknowledge is not absolutely perfect—so

long as we are not familiar with the actor's every gesture, so long as we have not fully visualised every figure used by the poet. When this has happened we are ready to enjoy a different and a greater drama, a different and more splendid poem.

We cannot conceive of God's foreknowledge, in so far as it exists, as being at all dim or vague. Either the future does not yet exist in His mind, or we must think of it as existing with absolute clarity. We cannot, therefore, feel that God is watching to see what we will do, that His joy or grief is concerned in the choices we make, if we are to think of Him as "perfectly familiar" with it all beforehand; and I think it is very difficult to dissociate from the conception of God's Fatherhood, from the Christian conception of the ideal attitude of man to God, the idea that God's happiness *is* concerned in the choices that men may make.

We must, however, admit that if we are to attribute responsibility, and faithfulness to that responsibility, to Creative Power, the possibility of future failure must be strictly limited. Parents have a certain knowledge of what may or may not happen to their children through life that the children do not share; and the restraint that the truest impulse of parenthood imposes in declining to bring children into the world unless or until there is provision for their maintenance and education, is probably something that touches the great Reality as nearly as any of our *a priori* reasoning. It would seem, then, that the prescience of God must extend to all possibility of disaster to His creation. For all possible disaster He must take

responsibility ; against the results of all possible disaster He must provide. His creative action cannot finish with the production of concrete self-directing life. His unceasing action toward it will naturally be that of a re-creative influence co-operating with, but not coercing, the progressive action of the self-directing force.

This action would need to be restrained and delicate—as the forces of nature must be restrained toward the crystal that only forms itself in stillness, as a nurse is restrained and delicate toward a sleeping babe lest it awake. If this be true, if fatherhood be the best symbol of Omnipotence, I should like in the next chapters to consider what the divine self-revelation to humanity would naturally be.

CHAPTER XI

THE DIVINE-HUMAN REVELATION

The facts of the universe are a parable from which we must abstract a meaning.

But only that interpretation which has been thoroughly assimilated can be perfectly articulate. When articulate it is a less perfect interpretation than that to which the mind is already advancing.

We dimly see in the creative process the Source of life, the developing life, and the relation of potential unity between them.

The nature of the Source is indicated by the quality of the development—energy into life, life into self-hood.

Illegitimate anthropomorphism perhaps consists in assuming that what we know as self-hood reveals the absolute nature of the Source.

It is because the Incarnation indicates vital union with the Source notwithstanding our ignorance, that it is of such vast importance.

What should we expect the revelation to be that came to and through one whose human will was perfectly united to the divine will?

1. That he would reveal more truly the nature of God in His relation to creation—God as the supreme lover of humanity, the supreme sufferer with humanity, and the supreme attraction of humanity.
2. That he would reveal more truly the results of the divine influence on the world, laying emphasis on the repairing of disaster, "binding up that which is broken," "healing that which is sick."

This activity of the Creator, when applied to free, self-conscious mind, produces the higher social development of the individual by means of a higher social environment. The highest and most universal of human societies are the great religions; hence we should expect the Christ to found a great religion.

The religion founded by the ideal man will bring into man's way of seeing life that order and proportion which best enables him to co-operate with the Creator in lifting up the human race and all creation to conformity with the Divine desire.

We should expect that order to set first the universal weal; next, the racial weal; and, lastly, the individual weal. In the next chapters we shall consider the attitude of Christianity to these three ends, taking them in the order in which practically men have to face them.

CHAPTER XI

THE DIVINE-HUMAN REVELATION

In the earlier chapters of this book I briefly summarised what seems to me a permissible interpretation of the parable of the creative process. There is much reference made in New Testament criticism to the reasons why our Lord taught in parables ; apart from reasons which may be more on the surface of His history, there must always remain the fact that reality when it comes to us most directly comes in a parable. I suppose we may take a parable to be a series of concrete happenings to which the human mind can give an abstract interpretation. The facts of our universe, as the physicist sees them, as the moralist sees them, as the religious genius sees them, are the parable from which we must abstract a meaning, Even if we grant the power of intuitive as well as sensuous knowledge, an intuition can only be the power to interpret the facts of consciousness more truly. Thus if God, as according to our Lord's story, sows the intuition of Himself broadcast over humanity, as the farmer sows the germs of organic life broadcast over the inorganic, these intuitions

will develop in precise accordance with the emphasis that each man gives to that fact of his consciousness in relation to every other fact of his consciousness. It would be truth to him only as he abstracted an interpretation out of the whole. Our sense of reality, I think, must be always inarticulate, if by articulate we mean, able to clothe itself in language which expresses a precise sequence of logical ideas. Only that interpretation of reality which has been thoroughly assimilated can be thus expressed. But reality is a whole, and the mind grasps it more and more. Each advance must affect the interpretation of the whole, and each successive interpretation can only be thoroughly assimilated and made articulate when it is already a less adequate interpretation than that to which the mind has progressed, *i.e.* when it is in a degree falsified. Such articulate interpretation has great use as a monument to one stage of knowledge ; it is never at close quarters with reality ; and this is true whether we speak of the pilgrim mind of humanity or of the individual man.

I have been trying in former chapters to say that I think we dimly see in the creative process not only a Source of greater power than is manifested in the process, but a fall from that greater power and a gradual ascent toward it, as if a life beginning in embryo were developing the image of that which gave it life. To confuse this developing life with the Source of life seems to me a false interpretation. Rather, I think, the facts before us would indicate three elements—the Source of life, the developing life, and the relation of poten-

tial unity between them. The nature of the Source of the developing life is indicated by the quality of its development—physical energy into life, life into self-hood ; that is, we seem bound to believe that self-hood approaches nearer to the nature of the Source.

Illegitimate anthropomorphism seems to me to consist in assuming that what we know as self-hood does not require a series of further and greater developments before we can understand the absolute nature of the Source of our being.[1] The fact that we may be still in an embryonic stage, many degrees removed from understanding God's nature, is what makes the Incarnation a belief of such vast importance. And if we analyse the dim vision of a Supreme Power manifested in the creative process, we may see reason to regard the personality and the tragedy of Jesus Christ as the natural manifestation of the action of that Power toward us.

If the life of Jesus was the manifestation of perfect human volition, if God's will therefore came into perfect union with the will of Jesus, what would naturally be the revelation of the divine will in its complete union with human will?

We confuse the subject of revelation when we suppose that it must necessarily enter into human life through the gate of the reason only, although perhaps we confuse it more if we suppose that it can enter into human life without the co-operation

[1] The assumption that we can detach ourselves from the rest of the physical universe, giving our spirits an entirely different origin, leads to this.

of reason—that any effort can be supreme in man that is not also the supreme effort of his understanding. The self is not divisible—a collection of faculties; it is will, emotion, reason—reason, emotion, will—always acting together. Revelation, inspiration, must come to the whole self, and may actuate will before it permeates the understanding. But our question here is not how revelation could come to a being whose will was in perfect harmony with nature in its supreme and normal equipoise, and with the Creative Intelligence through whose activity alone nature can be normal; but rather, what would we expect to be the revelation that would come to and through the Christ?

First, we should expect that He would show a truer revelation of God in His relation to creation, to the world, to humanity, than has ever been before. We are assuming that the salient fact of this relationship is that, in giving autonomy to creation, in giving freedom of enterprise to all life, in giving conscious free-will to living souls, God has become of necessity the servant, the nursing mother, the teacher who has no rod to enforce attention, the father of a wilful son, the lover of a wayward heart.

If, with what is now called the eschatological school, we subtract from the Gospel story any intention on our Lord's part of gradually leavening the world with His own ethics, any idea of forming a gradually increasing society which would uphold the divine ideals of government and brotherhood; if we subtract also any conception of our Lord as having the intellectual ability to see in

God's working in history and in the development of character an indication of the method by which the world must be saved ; if we think of Him as wholly absorbed in thoughts of His own unique union with God and of the need that He should die the most cruel of deaths in order to bring about the catastrophic advent of those perfect human conditions that He called "the reign of God" ; we still have in His career the revelation of what man most needed to know—the representation of God as undergoing passion and suffering while reconciling a wayward creation to Himself, and calling upon men to do the like. If it was the divine in Jesus that impelled Him to His death, then His meek suffering was an eternal characteristic. The Father who gives His best Beloved to suffer must be identified with the suffering ; the "suffering servant" is none other than the everlasting God. If we accept the fact of the divine creation and human free-will we cannot describe creative evolution better than in the phrases of Old Testament poetry. The Creator of the ends of the earth "fainteth not, neither is weary." He humbles himself as a lamb led to the slaughter, and as a sheep dumb before her shearers, because He will do humanity no violence, neither is there any wavering in His purpose to be satisfied in us by the travail of His own soul.

And I think we must come to the same conclusion if we regard our Lord as a great healer and ethical teacher. If God be love, and the universe formed by the word that goes forth from Him, the word that goes forth from creation must

also enter into the councils of the Eternal, for love is reciprocal. Now, this divine activity toward creation must of necessity be the force that guides life everywhere into the production of higher and higher organic forms, and into endowing those forms with increasing powers of self-healing, extending to the repairing breaches in organic structure. It is not only by reaching more and more complex organic forms, but also by the endurance that involves the power of self-healing, that we see nature conforming itself to what we suppose to be the divine ideal. In fact, it is obvious that it is only by the power to recover from injury and repair disaster that any species can accumulate the fruits of experience and store them in instinct. Man, for example, has dominated the earth quite as much by his power of recovering from injuries and repairing disaster as by initial strength. The activity, then, of the human will in harmony with the divine, *i.e.* the activity of the Christ acting on physical nature, must always be to reorganise what has become disorganised, "to bind up what is broken," "to heal what is sick." Thus we see that beyond the revelation of what God is in Himself, in His continuous relation to the world—shown by the *passion* of Christ—we should expect also a revelation of what God continuously does for the world, bestowing all that creation will receive, receiving all that creation will give, saying all that creation will hear, hearing all that creation will say—this shown by the *acts* of Christ.

Whenever creation arrives at consciousness of self and consciousness of the Creator it ought

consciously to co-operate with Him. In what ought this co-operation to consist? Certainly in two things. First, all right growth and development is co-operation with the Creator. The glowing of a sun, the growing of a tree, the fruitfulness of a stem of corn, the individual and parental activities of all life, in so far as they are healthy, beautiful, adjusted to the welfare of the whole, are in co-operation with God. Secondly, in so far as growth and development are not right, the making of them right by the Creator's own method of righting wrong is co-operation with Him.

We find even such co-operation as this in the work of mere instinct. Take as illustration of this the case of a little terrier which was found with an undesired litter. All the pups but one were drowned. In a few days it was decided to kill that one also. It was removed, drowned, and buried. With a desperate whine the little mother roamed the garden half a day, discovered the place of burial, exhumed the body, and when found had actually licked and warmed it back to a fluttering life. Here was a normal instinct working blindly for the righting of wrong, without anger, without despair, gently bringing life out of death by the intensity of love and the outgoing of her own vital warmth ; and it may be used as a spy-glass to show us the whole instinctive world of gentle endeavour toward fulness of life, as against the violence and robbery of nature which we have too lightly assumed to be also normal.

But to return. When creation becomes self-conscious and intelligent, the most important

knowledge for the creature is to understand the aim of the Creator, and by what method it is accomplished; and this knowledge when gained will naturally work on the creature in two ways: first, showing him that his own highest work must be in imitation of the Creator; and, secondly, strengthening him to endure the hardship of his task by knowledge of the Creator's sympathetic suffering and sustaining power, which ensures ultimate success. Thus we see the inspiration of our Lord's proclamation of the future perfecting of our life and its conditions.

It would, then, certainly seem necessary that the human life that in its volitional aspect is absolutely at one with the divine should have impressed itself outwardly upon the world as having this character—a character willing toward men God's own servanthood, and His own agony for men, and His own regal certainty that He would win men, and requiring His disciples to carry on His work in the same spirit. Thus we see the inspiration of our Lord's teaching concerning the taking up of the cross.

The more we ponder the dealing of the Creator with free, self-conscious mind, the more we come to believe that it is as the individual becomes a voluntary part of a larger psychic organism, and subserves the whole, that he rises toward God. This seems so as a fact of history, and we can see that it must be so because, as intelligence develops and the body becomes less dependent upon any particular physical environment, the life becomes more dependent upon the psychic environment,

and the individual, always in himself more or less defective, can only rise higher as the psychic environment rises higher. Of human societies the highest forms seem to be those that transcend local and temporary boundaries, like the great religions. Only a religion can transcend such boundaries, because in relating men to each other it draws the relating line, not direct from man to man, but, as it were, round the throne of heaven. It follows, then, that when the human will became perfectly united to the divine, the inspired subject of this union, *i.e.* the Christ, would found a great religion.

It has been well said that religion, if it be anything, must be everything; but it is everything looked at in a certain order and proportion, and the religion founded by the ideal man must introduce a better proportion and order into man's way of regarding life, and this order must be that which will best enable men to co-operate with the Creator in lifting up their own race, and the whole of terrestrial creation, into conformity with His desire. We should certainly expect the right order to set first in importance the universal weal; secondly, the racial weal; and, thirdly, the weal of the individual.

Let us proceed to consider the attitude of Christianity toward these three ends, taking them in reverse order, as man in practice must always do.

CHAPTER XII

INDIVIDUAL WEAL

The sense of individual imperfection is a pledge of progress and of ultimate perfection.

Only as regards moral imperfection does man feel he could have done better, while history emphasises the attainment of moral perfection in one instance.

A perfect environment is necessary for a perfect life, but life determines its own environment.

The one morally perfect man proclaimed a new environment.

The necessity for interaction of perfect outer conditions and perfect inner life in order to perfection is also seen in animal and plant life.

Processes of selection and growth are never instantaneous.

So if perfect environment came to-morrow all men or some men must be ready to manifest a corresponding perfection of inner life, if the perfect condition is to be permanent.

All students of the Gospels admit that Jesus proclaimed the coming of a perfect environment—the Kingdom of God, and also proclaimed the life of the Kingdom already present in the hearts of some men, and gave the signs by which it could be known.

In view of one divine purpose through all things, we shall look for correspondence of those signs described by Jesus with the characteristics of fullest life in evolutionary development.

Main distinctions between inorganic and organic life :

1. Organic life adapts itself to its conditions. Gentleness is of the essence not only of vegetable life but of animal life. The violence even of beasts of prey is incidental ; without gentleness and self-sacrifice they would perish.
2. Organic life works through age-long process to new forms ; the changes of inorganic life mark little progress. Illustrations : sand and cacti, etc.

   This power of initiation, characteristic of all organic life, must mark fitness for the Kingdom.
3. Organic life has capacity for greater difference, and also closer union, than inorganic. These characteristics are intensest in men, in whom the profoundest difference is marked by personality, and the closest union becomes brotherhood.

Human brotherhood is shown (*a*) in services to others rendered incidentally in furthering one's own ends (not a distinctively human function) and (*b*) in services consciously rendered to the collective good at the sacrifice of private good. This is distinctively human, and must characterise the ideal man and the ideal society.

Man must have this perfect social temper before he is fit for the perfect earthly environment.

These characteristics will be found to conform to the ethic of the Beatitudes.

Further, the close union of man with man must be completed by the sense of union with God and response to the divine appeal for sympathy.

Thus, if one could believe the perfection of life conditions could come about catastrophically to-morrow, it would be necessary to believe men in existence to-day who possessed the characteristics approved in the whole teachings of the Gospels. Before that perfection come about, and after, these characteristics must increasingly obtain.

Individual weal must consist in the exercise of these characteristics, and they are identical with those Jesus preached as necessary to participation in "the Kingdom."

CHAPTER XII

INDIVIDUAL WEAL

We have seen everywhere the individual man seems to be imperfect, but with a sense of imperfection that is a pledge of progress.

We see, however, little evidence of steady progress in the whole world around us, because individuals of any species are better or worse according to environment, and the environment fluctuates. A perfect environment is required for a perfect life.

In man it is the sense of imperfection in physique, understanding, artistic achievement, and in moral worth, which is the pledge of ultimate perfection. It is worthy of note that only in regard to this last point does he feel that his failure is due to his own lack of effort; while it is in regard to this one point that our records emphasise the perfection of Christ. The Christ proclaimed the advent of a new environment, the perfect environment which we have seen was needed for the perfection of the individual; but also proclaimed that only those who are fit for the environment could enter it. We have here the paradox that makes the eschatology of our Lord so baffling.

In this we see an illustration of how inadequate our thought is to formulate the simplest and most fundamental part of our life knowledge. We know that perfection in any kind of life consists in correspondence of two things that seem quite different. Thus, we say that the perfection of a rose depends upon the skill and power of the gardener—skill and power to give it the best conditions; but we know, too, that it depends on the vitality of the shoot or seed from which he starts the plant, while again the vitality of shoot or seed depends on some prior excellence of environment. We say then that the perfection of the rose depends on the conditions provided by the gardener and on the fitness of the shoot or seed, while yet it has no growth or root, to enter into the processes of growth and root. The fundamental fact behind this is the mysterious thing we call the rose-life, which no gardener can create, and which flows with fulness only when it meets with fit conditions, and which is itself the condition of good reproduction. It is exactly the same with a sheep or an ox; we have the outer environment and the inner life. The environment is something which comes from the power and skill outside the animal; the inner life is something we cannot conceive of apart from the animal, and which obeys laws that the herdsman cannot command but only serve. A perfect environment, then, is simply that which perfectly corresponds with the inner individual life; the life must exist, and must be good, before the good environment is determined. The life, then, determines its own

environment, while it depends absolutely upon that environment. The environment and the inner life are so closely inter-related that it is impossible to make any statement about one that does not involve the other.

Again, processes of selection and growth can never be instantaneous. All rose cuttings, all young cattle, could instantaneously be put in a perfect garden or a perfect pasture, but the surroundings would cease to be perfect for the healthy the moment the feeble or diseased were placed in them. As long as there is defect or disease in roses or cattle, vigilance and selection would first be necessary, and even when nothing but fit young life is placed in perfect environment time is still necessary for the interaction of life and environment to produce growth.

It is quite obvious, then, that were we convinced that the perfect environment of human nature would come, like the shifting of stage scenery, to-morrow, this would involve the corresponding conviction that men were ready to manifest an inner life corresponding to the perfect outward conditions, and this would involve the belief that that life had already determined excellent conditions for itself. This is the natural paradox involved in the coming of the kingdom. Our next work is to discover what are the characteristics of the inner life that will determine its own perfect environment.

Students of the Gospels who differ in almost everything else are at one, I think, in admitting that our Lord Jesus Christ proclaimed the advent

of a perfect environment which He called the Kingdom of God, and that He proclaimed that in His generation the life of the Kingdom was already to be found in the hearts of men, and that He gave certain signs or tests by which this initial stage of the Kingdom could be known. Believing in one divine purpose through all things, we should expect these marks to correspond to those characteristics which from our review of evolution seem to be the channels of the fullest life.

Even though we regard matter as a form of life although the lowest life in motion, organic life manifests activities which seem to us so much higher, so much more truly vital, that in comparison, we commonly call matter inanimate. What is the main distinction between them?

First, organic life does not oppose its conditions; it adapts itself to them, not them to it. When we consider the first beginnings of organic life in an inorganic world, we are almost appalled to think how defenceless, how tender, they must have been; and yet in them was a higher force that had in it the potentiality of greater things than all the vast mechanical forces of the elements around them. The organic life succeeded in establishing itself, in becoming strong, and in ultimately producing a race of beings who are able to wrest the secrets of earth and air and fire and water, and more and more control their energies. True, animal life often resorts to violence, but violence is not the characteristic that distinguishes it from inorganic life, nor is it the method by which it has multiplied and dominated the earth. Combativeness has

always been incidental to the higher life; gentleness is of its essence.

We shall all admit this to be true of the organic life of vegetation; and when we come to the life that moves about for food and shelter, we see that in those strains which develop into higher forms the young are never born in a condition in which they can immediately go to war. There is a stage in which all such animals are gentle and must receive gentleness. Without gentleness their life as we know it could not develop into higher forms, when developed could not persist. But violence is not thus essential to life in general at any stage, though almost all animals can be violent. The ox, the horse, the ape—these can live on and reach their highest perfection without going to war. We have no more reason to suppose scarcity, with its attendant violence, plunder, and rapine, to be normal, or the will of God, in instinctive life than they are in intelligent life; but we know that life could not progress without an ever-lengthening period of gentleness and tender care.

We ought to be quite clear about gentleness as a distinction of all organic life. We have heard so much about "nature red in tooth and claw," that in the imaginations of many carnage is the chief factor in animal development. But to the violence of fire and storm, avalanche and earthquake, the animal opposes no violence. In contrast to these the lion is meek. He is violent only when he requires food or when there is scarcity of food or wives, or when the young are in danger. There seems no proof that the faculties developed by

combativeness could not, as far as they are good, have been developed otherwise. As a matter of fact cubs develop in mere play the faculties they afterwards use in warfare. When we think of the innumerable forms of animal life which might have existed and do not, it would seem to lie with those who consider violence necessary to show why what has survived through violence ought to have survived. There is no proof that a lion or any other carnivorous beast ought to exist; there is no proof that the vegetarian, non-combative lion of apocalyptic vision could not exist; but there is absolute proof that if any lion were not gentle with his own cubs he could not exist. Further, if he were not gentle with his mate, and on the whole and in the main peaceable with his fellow animals, he could not exist. If he killed his prey indiscriminately, whether he needed food or not, he would exterminate them and so himself perish. It is true that many of the present powers of violent animals could not have developed without combativeness, but it is also true that violent animals and pests are in the near future doomed to extinction. Unless we are prepared to maintain that whatever is, is necessary—our sins included—we have no reason to insist that to be combative and carnivorous are necessary to life; but the gentleness, large tolerance, and self-sacrifice displayed in all animal life, even the fiercest, are certainly necessary. They are its main characteristics, the very characteristics by which any species dominates another, for they are necessary to its health, growth, and multiplication.

I take it, then, as proved that the method by which organic life established itself and grew and became the ruler of earth, was the method of managing the forces about it, adapting itself to them. This gentleness is the first distinction of organic life.

Secondly, these tiny beginnings of life had in them a power for the positive working out of law for its own ends of which inanimate matter in any of its forms gives little indication. Earth and air, fire and water, are, in their greatest activity, capable of a chiefly negative obedience to their ordinary rules of behaviour, or, as we say, to the laws that govern them; they do not transgress those laws in their maddest play, in their blindest rage, in their most profound transmutations. And the keeping of law with them seems an endless repetition, because through all their changes they seem only to relapse into what was before. Life, on the other hand, is positive, working along the laws of its existence to produce something that is always a fetch from the unknown. What we know as law in nature can give very little account of the variations or developments of organic life. What is there, for example, in the vegetation of the age in which our earliest coal beds were stored that gives promise of the sort of vegetation we have to-day? What was there in the earliest forms of animal life to give exact prophecy of the fauna of to-day? As far as we are able to judge of thousands of possibilities which might have called creatures into being, a few were actually realised,

or, as we say, came into real life. We know something of the laws of Mendel, but they co-exist with the fact that creatures that fly and run and swim are choosing their mates the world over, every moment and every hour, and their freedom of choice as to the individual mate is never denied by the plain man. Fulness of life certainly runs along the line of those who are fit to survive ; but other forms equally fit might have come into being that never did. Therefore, what has come into being is the result of a selective process that is more than mere non-transgression of law. The individual vegetable or animal has no duplicate ; it has, therefore, of various possibilities developed one, and this slight individual variation in the course of ages causes variations of kinds. But why is the variation in organic forms more positive than, let us say, the variations in sunsets ? Because new powers and new qualities arise in the organic life. The shiftings of the glories of light and vapour can occur evening by evening for centuries, always different but bringing no new thing to birth. It is different with life ; very slowly comes the new quality, the new power, the new invention, but always there is the addition of something new to the old.

We cannot be too clear about this distinction between organic life and such action and motion as we see in inorganic. Which of us has seen the desert literally blossom as the rose ? Here is a scrap of desert land, where nothing is but sand and cacti. You see a little green point in the sand which grows into a green projection dull in

colour, hard and dry. But the green projection continues to increase, and two other green projections come out of it, and then, in that dry place where the drenching light almost obliterates colour, there suddenly breaks from one of the hard, green, dry projections a splendid and delicate scarlet blossom, and that again withers ; and then again, for another year, the green projections grow upward and increase. Now, all the time the sand about it is never still ; the desert winds arrange it in furrows or in eddying drifts, or in some other form, continually altering the arrangement, and certain transmutations are going on by which portions of every grain of sand are passing away in the hot, dry air, and uniting with other substances in different chemical combinations. We cannot be sure that in any of them nature actually repeats herself, but the sand behaves merely in obedience to the forces that play upon it, whereas the obedience of the cactus to the law of its life is something which to common human sense appears much more positive. It is something which has a power of developing and reproducing the forms of its own development, so that when the body of the cactus dies and falls back to the level of the desert, as the sand ridges do, things are not as they may have been before the cactus lived ; for there are several new cactus plants that could not have been there without the parent plant. The law of the sand ridges is that they rise and fall and rise again, and although some change that affects the whole universe is thus produced, their rising and falling cannot be said to make

things new to anything like the same degree as does the rising and falling of the cactus forms.

Thus we see that while all organic nature shares in some degree the nature of what is inorganic it is distinguished from it, first, by being more gentle and adaptable ; secondly, by being more positive in its ways and results—ever enterprising, as we may say.

The third characteristic which distinguishes the organic from the inorganic is that it displays always a capacity for greater difference and closer union. One tree from another tree, one animal from another animal, differs in many more points than two grains of sand or two mountains can differ from each other. The trees and the animals are also more closely united, and the more highly developed organic life is, the greater is its variety and the more close the bond that unites it. Under this head we must look beyond the difference and union which characterize organic life in general to forms of them that are distinctively human, for in humanity, certainly, the greatest difference and closest union are to be found. We have seen how personality involves the profoundest difference. What is the characteristic of that closest union which in humanity becomes brotherhood ?

When we consider any human life in the light of its service to the whole of humanity, we perceive that we are surrounded by two distinct sorts of service : the one is that of a creature who by furthering his own ends, so far as his conscious aim is concerned, performs his highest function

for the whole of the creation in which he is set; the other is that of a creature whose aim is the collective good, and who only gives attention to his own ends as they make him the more efficient in his service to the whole.

As illustrating the first ideal we may take a tree, which, though it performs service by casting its seeds upon the wind, does so merely to get rid of what would hinder its season of rest; or the steer that becomes food for humanity merely by feeding upon the richest pastures and the clearest waters; or the captain of industry who, seeking only to advance his own prosperity, advances the prosperity of his neighbours. Most cases of the parental service which animal life discharges come under this head as far as the mere birth and suckling of the young are concerned. Perhaps we see the other ideal illustrated, in its rudimentary form, in the toil which birds will undergo day after day to fill the mouths of their offspring with food while they themselves have barely enough; or the case of animals that will expose themselves to danger in order to protect their young, even when these are well grown; and we get instances of the kind in ascending the scale of life till we reach the case of the man who will give half his scanty living to aid some poor creature less prosperous than himself.

Now certainly man excels other animals in this second sort of service; and if by "human" we mean that which man possesses pre-eminently, the first is not a human ideal at all. Primæval matter, of whatever nature it may have been,

served God and man in this first way, and so has every inanimate and animate thing. To regard it as the human ideal is to refuse to recognise any ascending scale in the quality of life. It is only in a society of men who seek the social weal first that the best social advantages can be "added to," or experienced by, the individual. Man is essentially social, but he must first be ideally social before he can experience the ideal social advantage.

It would be necessary, then, as men become attuned to the perfect environment, that they should develop this temper—the temper that indicates the method of progressive life—(1) ready to yield and give themselves without recompense; (2) ready to dare all things, full of enterprise; (3) ready to set the corporate weal first among the motives of life, recognising that only thus can any man attain to what all men truly desire.

The review of the evolutionary process finally leads us, through plant and animal life, and beyond what we may call the necessity of man's social nature manward, to the exercise of his social nature Godward. For we see in history that the pulse of fullest life, of greatest progress, beats only in the warmth and heat of an altar fire which expresses his conception of, and relation to, God. I think it will be found that corporate humanity has always flourished best under the notion that Deity was very closely allied to humanity. Wherever invisible Deity is not conceived of as suffering, wherever man ceases to identify God with human weal, wherever man conceives that he cannot hurt

or help God, there I think it will be found that whatever the concomitant intellectual brilliancy, human progress is in a *cul de sac.* Setting this conclusion from history beside our belief—based on the assumption of God as good and man as free—that the Creator must suffer, as well as rejoice, in the endurance of an autonomous creation, we come to see that some generous response on man's part to the ideal of Omnipotence suffering from human cruelty is a condition of man's more permanent development—the fourth sign of his fitness to survive, or of his capacity to respond to the perfect environment, or, in our Lord's phrase, to "enter the Kingdom."

If, then, one could believe that the perfection of life conditions, the absolute reign of God's will, could come about catastrophically to-morrow, it would seem necessary to believe to-day that men were in existence ready to evince the signs of fullest life we have just reviewed. If on the other hand we believe that the reign of God shall become absolute and universal—until all that God disapproves is destroyed, all that He approves is established—till then, however long or short the time, these characteristics must increasingly possess those who shall be able to stand in that day.

Individual weal, then, by our interpretation of the process of evolution, must consist in the exercise and growth of these characteristics, and we find them to be the chief characteristics that, according to the teaching of Christ, are the conditions of that repentance to which the only term set was the coming of the Kingdom.

CHAPTER XIII

THE WEAL OF SPECIES OR RACE

Perfection of the individual in isolation does not satisfy us, for if all things fulfil one purpose, variety must end in vital unity, and individual perfection involve perfection of the universe. As a stage toward this is involved the perfection of the race.

The individual, both in this life and in the next, must be in relation with the life of the whole, for out of all relation he would cease to exist.

Analogy to the constitution of the physical universe, any member of which, if it could get outside the range of gravitation, etc., would, so far as we know, cease to exist as an individual.

Attraction of man for man is analogous to the attraction of physical particle for particle.

The self that would isolate itself from the influence of all other selves is more liable to disintegrate than the self that is governed entirely by the spirit of age or class.

God's purpose for humanity on earth and beyond being one purpose, the unity of the race on earth must be perpetuated beyond death, human beings always, everywhere, co-operating with God to accomplish His purpose, or, possibly, defying that purpose to their own spiritual disintegration.

CHAPTER XIII

THE WEAL OF SPECIES OR RACE

We have seen that because the aim of biological evolution is a combination of qualities, qualities which we call physical and psychic—the latter being divided into world-regarding and spirit-regarding—and because autonomous life does not, in an early stage, rise to excellence, defects are apt to be handed down along the stream of fullest life. There is always defect even in those individuals that are fit to survive and transmit both healthy physical life and ideas which belong to the tide of progress. We have seen reason to believe that this defect in what is fit to survive is the sure pledge of immortality ; that, believing God's purpose to be the perfecting of every form of life within the limits of its own character, we are bound to believe that there is a future for the individual life in which its proper perfection can be realised. It follows from this that the good to be realised in this mortal life must be closely bound up with the immortal good as being part of one and the same purpose. Where individual life is not self-

conscious its future may be part of some other and more complex life ; but in that case as well we seem compelled to believe that it is a future that must right the wrong and perfect the imperfect.

This, however, takes us but a very little way. These necessities of thought that accompany all aspirations towards divine justice would all be satisfied if every individual in this and every other world passed at death into as many other universes ; but we have another requirement of thought which counteracts such a distributive notion, and that is, that if all things tend to the fulfilling of one purpose, harmony must be the end of all variety, and harmony requires an inner and vital unity of all the parts composing the whole. So that the perfection of the individual involves ultimately the perfection of the universe to which he belongs, but involves first, as a stage toward that, the perfection of the race to which he belongs. (I use the word "perfection" always as meaning the good possible, within the limit of the Creative definition, for each form of existence.) We have noted the fact that death and dissolution and the desuetude of ideas are necessary to any divine purpose of which we have indication in this mortal life, and that this leads us to perceive that for the individual immortal good must be bound up with some larger good of which it is a part, *i.e.* racial good. Humanity is the whole to which man most nearly belongs. It is racial perfection we now consider.

A race has an unbroken continuity. Its past

exists as truly as its present. It is not possible to break the continuity of the movement of life that flows from father to son toward the future perfection of the human race on earth; and every individual part of that movement must, if it continue to live as an individual beyond death, continue the relation to the whole that it once had, or cease to exist according to its kind. Apart from the race the individual would disintegrate and the liberated energy pass into another form. All the evidence we have concerning humanity is that man exists only in relation to the human race; if he lost that relation he would cease to be man. Thus we have reason to believe that, wherever his spirit goes, so long as it exists as a human force it must so exist by virtue of its relation to the race.

I might illustrate the relation of individual spirits to their race beyond this life by the force of gravitation. Science suggests to our imagination the conception of our physical universe as revolving about itself within limits defined, although science has no means as yet of defining them; that is to say, we are bidden to conceive of a huge, transparent, lens-shaped universe, hanging in space, within which suns with all their satellites revolve round suns, and all revolve round some common centre; and within this vast circumference the laws of motion produce harmony of motion. If any star of this universe should shoot out beyond all range of the force we call gravitation, it would cease to exist as a star; for it is its own inertia and the pull of gravitation that hold it together,

that make it what it is. We cannot think of such dissolution as the perfecting of the star.

It is not only in our physical relations to the race that we are one with it. Our spiritual powers are dormant until they are evoked by personal relations to our kind. We can, of course, suppose that our spirits existed before this life,—a view for which there seems little evidence, and which on the whole raises more difficulties than it solves,—but in that case the social unity of humanity has pre-existence as well as after-existence, for there can be no question that it is only in our dealings with one another that we possess our souls. Dim is the light that gravitation as a symbol can throw on this subject, but we all know that in the world of spirit or mind one mind has a pull on other minds, and experiences their pull.

This force, little as we know about it, is certainly not chiefly important in its occasional or abnormal manifestations, as when one mind suddenly falls under the power of another, or is abnormally enslaved to another ; its chief importance is that it is the force that keeps every mind an integer. The importance of gravitation is not shown in such individual facts as the fall of a meteorite, but in its causing every body to retain its form and relations. And we certainly have evidence that the more the human being endeavours to hold himself isolated and independent of all other minds, the more is the self liable to disintegrate, and that even more miserably than when normal self-direction is exchanged for direction by the random influence of the mob-spirit. It

is the middle course between these two that is normal.

So intimate is this relation of mind to mind that the difficulty lies in believing the individual self to be permanently distinct. Humanity appears in this aspect to be one great continuous mind, of which the self is but a temporary manifestation. We cannot stop there; humanity is but a temporary manifestation of the mind of the universe. This is Pantheism; and it does not seem to me to interpret our life as truly as the belief in personal immortality; but I think we can have no right to hold the idea of personal immortality without the complementary belief in the social immortality of the race.

If the human race on earth be thus in a very real sense a unity, and God's purpose for humanity be one purpose, in the life beyond death men must still remain within this unity. Whatever, wherever, human spirit may be within the bounds of God's purpose for humanity—humanity and every soul of it must be proceeding, either co-operating with God for the accomplishment of His human purpose, or, possibly, in defiance of that purpose being swept back through its own spiritual disintegration into some reservoir of latent self.

All I would urge here is that, as our mortality teaches us that man is less than mankind, and exists, not for himself, but for mankind, so it also teaches us that if our immortality be not social and be not a life continuous with this, the promise of this life would never be fulfilled; but that if it be social and be continuous with this life, we have

every reason to believe that the Christian ethic, which is in harmony with the trend of progress, is the best preparation for it. This ethic sets before men the purpose of bringing creation into harmony with the Creative Will; and this must be done by invariable kindliness, ceaseless enterprise, closest fellowship, and the worship of a God who suffers in every breach of these.

CHAPTER XIV

THE UNIVERSAL WEAL

The universal weal is the weal of God.

We can only think of God positively in relation to our universe, as the source of its energy, the architect of its progress, the sharer of its suffering, the ruler of its perfected condition, revealed through a human life perfectly at one with Himself, as the sun is revealed through its photosphere.

The goal of God must be also the goal of man. With God he must co-operate, first to attune his mind and will to God's, and then to lift humanity and all creation to perfection.

How can we conceive that universal perfection?

The universe being the outcome of one purpose we conceive all its parts and their perfection as interdependent.

Similarly, confining ourselves to our own world and all it contains, we must realise that the most insignificant plant or animal, though it may not directly serve humanity, must subserve the all-embracing purpose of God in some way.

For if God could disregard His lower creations when man came forth, He could disregard man if in some other world a higher race were evolved.

Hence humanity can only feel assured of salvation because of the faith that God wills the salvation of the whole.

Thus the argument for man's salvation founded on the idea of the earth as the centre of the universe, and man as its supreme product, must give way to an argument consonant with the idea of the relative insignificance of our earth in the universe, and of man's life upon it. That argument must be the universality of God's purpose as embracing the least of His creatures, and a consummation of that purpose which we do not see on earth, in which every class of life must have its part, for if any part of the universe can be Godless, the whole may be.

Our Lord taught emphatically that nothing lives or dies without God.

The universality of the divine purpose will only overwhelm and confuse our thought unless, with Jesus Christ, we centre attention on its fatherliness, involving as it does a consummation that will fulfil the promise of all things.

Such vision of God's end, though we can only see it in blurred outline, can help us to the rejecting of paltry ideas of God's Church and His heaven, and to some hint of reconciliation between the world-affirming and the world-negating spirit.

The universal perfection, in which consists the weal of God, must always be the goal of the extra-regarding purpose of corporate humanity.

CHAPTER XIV

THE UNIVERSAL WEAL

THE ideal religion must set before us the universal weal as the ultimate goal.

The universal weal must be the weal of God, because we cannot conceive of God as satisfied until His creation is conformed to His intention. But how can we conceive God's welfare as dependent on His universe? All our positive thought of God must be of Him in relation to our universe. Of anything beyond our universe we can only think negatively. Man is forced to think of God negatively, as always existing beyond our physical universe and beyond our thought; he can think of Him positively only as the source of all energy in nature and as what we have described as an artist in life. He is compelled to think of Him as not yet satisfied because of the defects of nature and the waywardness of nature's will; to think of Him as enduring suffering because duration and autonomy are of the essence of the life He gave; to think of Him as omnipotent, causing by His endurance all things to come under His reign; to think of Him concretely, as typified and

revealed by a human life volitionally in perfect union with His own, as the centre of our solar system is revealed to us through its photosphere. As we feel the light and heat of the sun proceeding from the real sun unknown behind the photosphere, and from the photosphere born of the sun, in which it clothes itself, so—to revert to a former figure—man feels the Spirit of God proceeding from the God of whom he cannot think, and from the God of whom he can think. It is this God whose welfare we feel must be involved in the welfare of His universe.

And as perfection or conformation of the universe to His intention is the goal of God, so nothing less can be the goal of the individual man. While the co-operation of the individual man with God must begin with that repentance which is the turning of his own will from all that displeases God, the setting of his own heart upon all that pleases God, it must proceed to the effort to lift humanity and the whole of terrestrial creation till it satisfy God, while the end can be nothing less than the perfection of the universe.

Let us try to realise what is involved in that universal perfection which is the purpose alike of God and of every intelligent creature who realises the Creator's purpose and makes it his.

If we think of the universe as being, with all its variety of sun and solar system, the outcome of one purpose, we must regard all its moving bodies as parts of one whole, and their separate perfection and the perfection of the whole must be inter-dependent. Even if each separate sun at some

time in its career may plunge into darkness or dash into pieces in a blaze of light, we yet cannot conceive of its energy as ceasing to contribute something to the whole. Thus the law of the conservation of energy, when we consider things deeply, is found to be a law of purposeful thought. Anything else than this would be chaos. We may say the same thing of the planets of a solar system ; if that system is to have its age of maturity and perfection, each planet must contribute to it. Thus, we conceive of the perfection of our planet Jupiter as having a more direct bearing on the perfection of our solar system than upon the perfection of, let us say, the system of Arcturus, or any other solar system.

In the same way, when we come to our terrestrial world and to the races of organic things upon it, we must think of its flora and fauna as minor entities whose perfection or conformity to the divine ideal of their health and beauty bears on the greater perfection of the world to which they belong. Although the human race has for ages regarded both these either as existing accidentally, as it were, or to subserve the purpose of humanity ; as far as we can now see, a very great deal goes on in the animal and vegetable worlds for which man has not, and never can have, any use, and as we cannot now conceive them as outside God's purpose, we must think they subserve some other purpose of God. The animals of the jungle, the birds that haunt the polar seas, the splendid poisonous vines of the tropics, the not less splendid flowering plants that blossom

under warm ocean shallows—what direct bearing have these upon man's physical or mental perfection ?

If there is a creative purpose for man there is also a creative purpose, not only for the earth which is his mother and the ocean that in giving him atmosphere and drink is his nurse, but for all the other nurslings that these two have reared together. And the reason that we feel so sure of this is that if the earth's other nurslings could be disregarded for God's purpose as soon as humanity was brought forth, then humanity might be disregarded if some other world in the universe could bring forth a higher race ; for earth is not alone in space ; it is an integral part of a universe. If we feel within ourselves that we shall not be lost, we must realise that it is not to a special but to a universal salvation we must look.

We are too accustomed to take the clothing of our essential religious ideas direct from philosophic or religious thinkers of the past—men who, in the then stage of scientific knowledge, naturally believed that earth was the centre of the universe ; and the consequence is that, while the modern man who disregards his religious or classical traditions is vividly conscious in all departments of his being of the apparent insignificance of his world in the whole vast system of the universe, is vividly conscious in every department of his being that all the psychic powers in man have been gradually formed by the conditions around him, just as his physical senses were evolved ; the religious man is apt merely to give a reasonable assent to these

statements in some dry and unproductive corner of his mind, while his more vital thoughts, his emotions and his activities, remain uninfluenced by them. The fact that we have no knowledge of other races of spiritual beings beside ourselves still constitutes for him a strong presumption that there are none. He thinks of man as having little vital connection with the earth from which he sprang and as comparatively alone in the vast universe with God.

But this undoubted fact of the relative insignificance of our world and the little day of each man upon it, is the most trenchant argument for the age-long significance of what may be called "the least of one of these little ones" in any department of God's creation. For if we believe in divine purpose we cannot suppose that any atom of dust, or blade of grass, or microscopic midge with the rainbow imprisoned in its wings, can be disregarded by that purpose while man is considered by it, unless we are equally willing to suppose that this world and humanity may be disregarded if some other race in some other planet conformed itself better to the desire of God. We must remember that it is essential to our idea of divine purpose that it be one purpose; it may have various intermediate goals, but they must all contribute to one another. It is impossible to conceive of God as willing or desiring or accomplishing anything that would militate against or retard His own purpose with regard to the whole or any of its parts. And so far as the autonomy of the universe and of any individual in it may

vary from His purpose, it is, I think, impossible to suppose that it could vary so much as to baffle that purpose. For we have seen that wherever creation is in the stage where God exercises what we have called mechanical purpose, it has little autonomy, that nature becomes more and more capable of opposition to Him as it becomes more highly organised. That is why we instinctively feel that the stars in their courses obey God better than we do. But we cannot suppose that the will of the most highly organised creature could ultimately overbear God's purpose. Before that point could be reached the individual energy must become self-disintegrating, if that be possible ; and the individual life-energy would in that case enter again the flux of world-energy. All I want to make clear here is that we cannot reasonably use the words " universe," " universal," " creative purpose," " divine purpose " without perceiving that they involve a consummation of which every surviving thing must be a component part, and that in a sense that we do not at present see accomplished in the terrestrial life of the individual things around us.

We need to dwell on this point with real thought but not fancifully, with real sentiment but not sentimentally. Think, for example, of the ploughshare driven through the daisy root and the nest of the field-mouse, both of necessity ruthlessly destroyed at the beginning of a beautiful little life. Think of rabbits in a field of corn : the reaping machine and the reapers go round in ever-narrowing circles ; the frightened rabbits

huddle in the middle until they are forced to run from the vanishing refuge, and then, with joy and boisterous shouting, the harvesters club them to death. Or take the snails and slugs that of necessity we poison in our own gardens; and all the beautiful microscopic life, vegetable as well as animal, that we constantly crush beneath our feet. I do not see that the mere fact that these things may have lived long enough to transmit their life to other things makes any sufficient atonement for their premature destruction. There must be some atonement, for they are each part of the experience of God. It seems quite possible that where self-consciousness is not developed millions of single lives might find their completion in one; in some way or other they must have the completion of the little part of God's purpose which they represent. If not, the whole world of marvellous adaptation and beauty revealed to us by the microscope must be God-less, and if anything is God-less then everything may be God-less.

Jesus Christ saw this very clearly: are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and not one of them dies God-less; God cares for the very appearance of the grass of the field which in its full-blown beauty is burned by man for his necessary purposes. The God who could disregard it and still be God could very well disregard us. And the same must be true of the crashing to pieces of the most dark and distant stars; they cannot break up without God.

Some time ago, one of our statesmen recommended us who live in England to cease from

our insular thinking, thinking that caused our sympathies and activities and imaginations to be bounded by our own wave-beaten shores; he advised that, instead, we should "think imperially." Well! all that is defective about thinking imperially is, that to many people it simply means a more intense form of insularity, with merely a wider local boundary. True enthusiasm for our own nationality ought to produce the greatest enthusiasm for humanity, which includes other nationalities. The greatest loyalty to our king ought to produce the greatest loyalty to the King of kings—that title meaning that He is just as much the Protector of the rulers of other nations as He is of our own. We ought to think universally to be good thinkers in any department of thought, or in order to do any bit of intense particular thinking well. This is true above all things in a religion in which the object of devotion is God the Father Almighty, who made the heavens and the earth.

I do not think we can think universally without either becoming hopelessly confused with masses of details whose reason for existence and whose adequate end we can form no conception of, or else fixing our thoughts upon the fatherliness of the divine purpose. It was upon the fatherliness of divine purpose that our Lord centred His attention and strove to centre all human attention. Belief in the fatherhood of the Creator involves the knowledge that the consummation toward which we tend must be an end that will fulfil, not only all the promise of our

lives, but the promise of all things. It is probably to stamp this conception most deeply upon us that we are allowed to live in a world in which all things impress upon us the sense of the reality of their promise and its inadequate fulfilment. There is not necessarily anything final in the idea of consummation ; it must be a new departure for an endless progress ; but it must be a fulfilment of promise. It must be the completion or goal of purpose ; and every completion must be a component part of the universal purpose. We men are more particularly concerned in the victory of the human soul, the far-off transition in which it emerges from its labours and its conflicts to enter more and more fully upon their fruition in the joy of God ; that victory must be only a part of the victory of a complete and perfect humanity, for as long as in any member of the whole human race the victory is not consummated, all other members must be under the taint of failure, must be still striving to attain that victory.

If we reflect upon the unity of the race and believe in its immortality, we must be assured that this will be so. This involves the belief that every immortal spirit must be concerned for the salvation of the race until it be accomplished—defining salvation to mean conformity to God's ideal for humanity. But the spiritual condition of any subject depends upon its environment. Before the race is conformed to the divine ideal the environment of its nursery, earth, must be conformed to His ideal, as also the environment of its immortal future. The environment of

humanity must be perfected with humanity. All things must be conformed to God's will or brought to an end.

All this is so difficult to conceive that it produces upon our imagination the blurred effect of an apocalyptic vision, which does not go far, in our present state of development, toward helping us to any realisation of the great consummation toward which we tend. But it helps us to a rejection of paltry ideas concerning the Church of God and the Christian heaven, and it helps us to a glimpse of infinity in which the two straight lines of world-affirmation and world-negation meet. To think of the perfection of earth as an aim of God's purpose, and of man as His chosen minister for the accomplishment of that purpose, is a great stimulus to the world-affirming spirit: to think of man's future as a part of an immortal and perfected humanity which has a spiritual destiny in the spiritual consummation of universal life, is to know this world and all its concerns as trivial exceedingly. Yet it is only in the synthesis of these two aims of God's purpose, only in the conception of them as interdependent—the first all-important as a necessary part of the second—that human salvation can be accomplished. Our Lord seems to have affirmed both the earth-purpose and the final spiritual purpose of the Father, and so difficult is this synthesis to our common minds that much confusion has always arisen in the interpretation of His doctrine of the future. With transcendent insight He seems to have seen that all that was

wrong on earth—the existing human state—must be disintegrated, all that was right must blossom and glow into a perfect human polity—the reign of God as in heaven so on earth; while at the same time His ultimate gaze was fixed always upon a spiritual humanity of which He felt himself to be the shepherd-king, whose destiny was not of this earth. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my teaching shall not pass away."

We must, therefore, hold our minds fixed upon the purpose of God, and bring all our thoughts into obedience to the knowledge that within that purpose there cannot be diverging lines. The perfection of earth wrought by human ministry, the physical perfection of the universe in which earth is but a speck, and the spiritual perfection of universal life—these, as necessary parts of one purpose, must have vital interdependence on one another. Each is necessary to the weal of God. This universal perfection must always be the goal of the extra-regarding purpose of corporate humanity, both in its earthly and immortal life.

CHAPTER XV

WORLD AFFIRMATION

Those beliefs which account to a man for existence are his real creed. When any faith ceases to do this for men it ceases to be a living religion.

A religion may be genuinely adhered to which is not a key to existence, but it is a dying religion.

The Pharisaic religion in the time of Christ is an instance.

The permanent element in religion is the effort of each age to reconcile religious feeling and knowledge.

The central Christian doctrines must be felt to offer the most fundamental explanation of the facts of existence as we know them to-day if Christianity is to continue a vital religion and not become a mere mythology.

The conception of the work of Christ developed in the early Church as the possession of new facts required it.

The fact that Christian faith has always been able to assimilate new knowledge, and re-read the Christian revelation in its light, suggests that Christianity originates in an external Power, not in man.

There is no stopping-place in this process of development as facts call for a more fundamental explanation.

The discovery in our times of the relative insignificance of our world in the astronomical universe demands a deeper interpretation of the meaning of Christ's earthly life and death.

Consider how the conception of the union of the divine and the human natures in Christ is affected by modern conceptions of Divinity and humanity.

No longer able to suppose God concentrates care on this little earth, we cannot suppose we know as much of what there is to know about Him as before. Our case is like that of a child in the nursery when he begins to find out that his father, though devoted to his interests, has wider interests of which a child can know nothing.

Again, humanity being but an incident in world evolution, and God being involved in all material creation, the older conception of the human spirit as wholly independent after death of the physical universe and of other grades of life, is not tenable. Rather, co-operation with God in a future life would seem to consist in doing what we see He has always been doing for creation, and fitness for that must be attained here in the effort to re-create earth.

In the light of these new conceptions of Divinity and humanity the Incarnation must manifest the relation of God not merely to men, but to the whole living creation, of which man is but a part.

We conceive the Atonement of Christ as manifesting God as working and suffering to bring man with His whole living creation into free obedience to His will, until it fully express the character He first conceived for it.

If man knows by experience that God in Christ thus deals with him, then we have reason to think the larger creation of which man is so intimate a part will also, by the patient love and suffering of God, ultimately be conformed perfectly to His will.

The difficulty considered of holding that man's spirit is a special and more direct creation of God, and that, therefore, the revelation through Christ bears only on man's spiritual nature.

The modern philanthropic spirit can only be justified to the Christian by seeing in it an attempt to work as God works to redeem the whole terrestrial creation.

CHAPTER XV

WORLD AFFIRMATION

THE sum of a man's religious beliefs must account to him for existence, and existence must, in his estimation, require that account. What he may believe over and above this is not his vital creed, any more than his various historical and scientific beliefs are his vital creed. He may have an elaborate cosmogony and eschatology which he holds in just the way he may hold the belief that the English nation sprang from a union of different races, or that Mars is inhabited. His vital religion is that part only of his accepted beliefs which seems to him necessary to explain his existence. This must have been true of all the faiths ever held by men, and whenever a faith ceased to satisfy men as an effort to explain the "here" and "now" it ceased to be a vital faith.

The distinction between a living religion and a genuine religion seems necessary. A man may give most genuine adherence to a religion because of its sacred associations, because he is determined to believe it, and it alone, to ignore those facts within his cognisance which it will not explain, to

ignore the demand of those facts for explanation. And in this honest and persistent will to believe he may regulate his whole life nobly by the moral law of his creed, and in so doing he will undoubtedly have conscious communion with God, who meets men always as far as they will meet Him, and he may have a very high degree of such conscious communion. He will understand the language of God more imperfectly than if he had not determined to ignore some of the facts in which it is written, but he will understand enough to know that the attitude of God is blessing. His is not a living but a dying theology, because that part of his world which his belief does not attempt to explain is ever encroaching with a larger and larger demand. Life does not stand still; unless his belief move forward to explain the newer facts of existence it will become more and more inadequate. He may remain faithful through his life, but in the next generation his interpretation of life—*i.e.* his religion—must have fewer adherents, and again fewer as time goes on. We cannot doubt the entire sincerity of men who, in any age of the world, have turned at bay to fight for the precise belief of their forefathers when a widening horizon demanded a more fundamental explanation; nor can we doubt, if we have any faith at all in God, that He has always met the religious heart by whatever highroad or by-path it has gone to seek Him, and that He has enriched the life of every honest worshipper of His hidden majesty under whatever form they sought to express His unseen

righteousness. But, all the same, theologies that have for centuries held nations have become mythologies to their successors, and old "divine dispensations" have given place to new.

Candid investigation, I think, makes it abundantly clear that the Pharisees were entirely genuine in their devotion to the God of their fathers, while yet their religion was a case in point. The prayers, the psalms, of the synagogue up to and long after the Christian era have no more taint of the artificial about them than has our own ritual, and our Lord's criticism of the Pharisees, so far as we have any true record of it, must undoubtedly have been passed upon the best and not the worst of them, for no just critic ever judges of any ideal by those who do not live up to it. We see, however, in the drama of the Gospels that a very important new fact, which they refused to assimilate, had come within the cognisance of the Pharisee consciousness in the spiritual potency of our Lord's life. For a few centuries new facts had been pressing into the Jewish horizon that demanded a larger, deeper, and more tender conception of Deity than that given in the "books of Moses" by which the Pharisee had tried to interpret, not only the world, but his own intuitions and the rich religious literature of his race. In His early ministry Jesus seemed like the very impersonation both of that demand and the answer to it, but His goodness broke through the standards of the Pentateuch as Samson broke through the withes that the Philistines had bound about him. They held to their standards, insisting

that when He would not conform He could not be good. The goodness of Jesus was a fact which their interpretation of religion could not explain; in order to ignore it they called it wickedness. In this they were acting a part, just as any doctrinaire acts a part when out of loyalty to his doctrine he thrusts aside whatever seems to controvert it, insisting that it must be evil.

We must suppose that since the world began there has been but one inward and spiritual faith, which in each of its various stages has found many outward and visible expressions, and no doubt in each stage there has been a measure of truth mixed in its expression with much that was fantastic, as though a man half-blind should see in the spiritual world men as trees walking. And the truth of one stage has been incorporated into the larger truth of the next. This process must be always going on, but by such fine gradations that the human eye can only detect the process when some unusually strong personality voices the advance. If the drama of the historic life of Christ is to have permanent significance for us it must be because it explains this process, which has lasted, and will last, with the human race on earth, and, if we may reason by analogy, will be the method of progress in the future environment of humanity.

If we are to continue to accept Christianity, the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Atonement, which are its warp and woof, must offer the most fundamental explanation of existence as we now apprehend it, must be demanded as an explanation by every fact within our cognisance.

If we cannot interpret them to be as much as this, however passionately we may adhere to them, the familiar story current in the Church to-day of the councils of Heaven in regard to man's salvation will become, as it has become to many a sincerely religious Modernist, to many a sincere and true-hearted agnostic, a mere mythology.

Unless the outline of the ministry of Jesus on earth is the manifestation of God's eternal action toward humanity from the beginning to the end of time, the doctrines of the Incarnation and Atonement are inadequate to explain themselves in their relation to the process of creation as we now understand it. If God truly entered into union with humanity the Incarnation must be the key, the epitome, of the whole terrestrial process, retrospective and prospective. If it will not bear the ever-increasing demand of events for explanation it is not the central divine event of earth. On the other hand, if it is the divine event that explains the earth-process there must be in it an idea of man as well as an idea of God which the race has only begun to fathom. We must be able to derive from this event an ever-progressive knowledge of human possibility and of divine salvation to meet our progressive need.

Now, in what sense does man to-day need a conception of God's salvation more widely applicable than he needed in the first century of our era? To answer this let us look back to the time when the first apostles of Christianity were sent out with the proclamation of the kingdom. We

have in the early history of Christianity a very vivid presentation of transition between the early conception of the salvation to be wrought by the Christ and a later conception.

First, the disciples go out to cry the advent of the Kingdom. The Jesus they know is a Jewish prophet, and the Kingdom which was coming from God was to bring to the elect of the Jewish nation exemption from that national dishonour and disintegration under which they were writhing. Jerusalem is the centre of their world, and the elect of the Jewish nation the nearest kin of God. They do not regard the sacrifice of their Master as necessary to the culmination they preach.

Later, after the resurrection we have this same conception but deepened and widened. The disciples still come to the risen Lord asking, "Wilt thou now restore the Kingdom to Israel?" but they now believe that the Jesus whom they knew is the heaven-sent Deliverer, and that it had behoved Him to suffer shame and death for the salvation of the elect, and that the elect must also fill up what was behind of His sufferings in order to obtain future exemption from dishonour and suffering. Jerusalem is still the centre of the world, and the Jews are still nearest of kin to God.

Later still, after hesitation, discussions and disputes, the elect among the Gentiles are found to be on an equality with the elect among the Jews as to nearness to God. Jerusalem, which has fallen, is no longer the centre of the world.

The Christ is no longer the Jewish Messiah, but a Being more glorious and more divine.

This seems to have been the line along which Christianity ought to have gone on, developing an ever increasing conception of the efficacy of the divine suffering, an ever increasing knowledge of the greatness of the Being who suffered, and an ever growing conception of the greatness of the salvation thus accomplished.

The development was not steady ; there were relapses ; there was a tendency always to go back to narrower ideas ; but what I would suggest is that the early disciples, trained as they were, were quite justified by the most and best they had been taught about the ways of God, in believing Jerusalem to be the centre of the world, and the Jewish nation nearest to God, and in thinking of the office of the Christ accordingly. Their mistake did not lie in their sense of God's nearness and in their hope of salvation for themselves, or in their allegiance to the duty they saw, but in failing to perceive that their experience was a part of a larger whole. The fact that their belief in Christianity was secure enough to survive the shock of the dawning of this knowledge suggests that it originated, not in them, but in a Power external to them.

This process has since been going on with ever fine gradations. The Christian has ever been finding himself a part of a larger and ever larger whole, and the Christ has always gone on before the lagging Church in ever increasing majesty, showing how it had behoved God to suffer, and

how great was the salvation accomplished. Just as, in the Gospel story, upon the road up to Jerusalem He pressed before them, just as upon the road at Emmaus He made as if He would go farther—just so, with majestic footsteps and ever increasing union with Divinity, He is always passing on. There is no stopping-place—there never has been a stopping-place ; but, looking back, we can see certain landmarks which suggest the future road by marking the direction in which the road has come. For example, looking back to examine the universe as it appeared to Dante, who mapped out the physical conceptions that had obtained until his day, we have what seems to us now a toy universe. The world is its centre, and the spirit of man has no kindred with the earth from which it sprang, but is akin only to God.

We must not regard with disdain, or seek to ignore, the very desperate fight which the Church made in the hope of retaining the belief that the world was the centre of the universe, and that the spirit of man, akin to the divine Spirit, did not stoop to kinship with the rest of creation. It is shallowness and lack of insight that make us suppose that the discovery of the insignificant place of our world in the astronomical universe, of the intimate kinship that man has, body and soul, with the whole creative process as we now know it, ought to make no difference to our conception of the nature of the Christ and to the interpretation we must give to the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Atonement if we are still to hold these. We cannot force an interpretation

very naturally abstracted from the parable of nature as it was once known, upon the parable of nature as it is now known. We must either deny that nature has any significance whatever, or we must enlarge our interpretation as our knowledge is enlarged.

If we go back to theological treatises on the Incarnation we find that what has been insisted upon is the union of the two natures—Divinity and humanity. This conception clearly depends for its depth and breadth upon the conception of Divinity and the conception of humanity which are available.

Let us consider these two conceptions as they present themselves to-day, and, first, of the modern conception of Divinity.

To the science of to-day this world is a trivial detail in the "process of the suns." It is not possible for us to think that we can know as large a proportion of what there is to be known about God as before, when we argued from man to God on the assumption that both concentrate their attention upon the same earth. The child of a great ruler may have intimate knowledge of his father as he sees him in the nursery. From that connection he knows how strong is his father's interest in his work and play. But when he discovers that this father also attends to the affairs of cities and provinces wholly beyond his little ken, there enters an element of mystery. He would not be intelligent if the personality of the ruler did not assume a new aspect for him. His father's business with toiling millions, with armies

and navies, princes and traders, he cannot even imagine ; these people do not exist for him or he for them ; and it becomes evident to him that he cannot share all his father's interests ; while all the small interests of his own life which they can and do share together, he begins dimly to see must have deeper significance for his father than for him ; for while his work and play are his whole life, they are of yet more importance to the father, having relation in his mind to far-reaching ends of which the boy knows nothing. Thus we, who can no longer suppose that the universe exists only for us, who must believe that if it is the universe of a living God it is full, not only of life, but of specialised forms of life of which we can have no idea—begin dimly to understand also that because our little affairs are of importance to so great a God, they must have far vaster import for Him than we are able to conceive.

As regards the modern conception of humanity. To the science of to-day humanity means, and rightly means, an incident in terrestrial evolution. Whether consciousness, as M. Bergson seems to say, has descended into matter and tunnelled through it, evolving brain and nerve ; or whether brain and nerve and all the powers of mind or spirit have been evolved together ; the beginning of the process lies back in the beginning of creation. Are we, then, to suppose that it ends with man's death? If not, have we any reason to suppose that man, so intimate a part of the complex interdependence of things, will in immortal life be wholly independent of the physical universe

or of other grades of living creatures? Again, can we suppose that the divine processes in the past—the formation of the crystal, the beginnings of life—are not as much processes of spiritual power as, for example, the formation of our own characters to-day? If God is involved in material creation, are we to be so spiritual the moment we die as to be entirely quit of material conditions? Have we any reason to suppose that the work of the immortal human being, in so far as he co-operates with God, will be of a nature wholly different from God's? If it is not, how little room there is for those popular conceptions of a future life in which there is no storm and stress, no battle to be fought and won, no stubborn field to be cultivated, no wayward child to be trained! On the other hand, if co-operation with God in the future life means doing what we see that God has been doing from the beginning of creation, a process in which we have so far taken only an unconscious or unintelligent or wayward part, the fitness for it can only be attained here in the effort to re-create earth, learning how God intends His work to be done and what faculties He requires in His servants.

With these wider conceptions of Divinity and humanity our question is, Are the great doctrines of Christianity fundamental enough to underlie it all? We can no longer conceive of them as occupying a niche in the temple of reality; they must either be the corner-stones or be mere illusions. If the Incarnation means anything to us, it must mean the manifestation of the Divine

relation to humanity. But we have learned that humanity is only an incident in creation. It follows that the Incarnation is the manifestation of how God works in creation, what He is trying to do for the whole earth. If we could obtain an adequate answer to this "what" or "how" we should have, of course, the one true and only theology. It is evident that we can only have such an answer as humanity on earth at any given time is capable of understanding. But if the Incarnation is really the divine event that the Church holds it to be, every increase in our knowledge ought to bring us an increase of power to understand, through the Incarnation, what God is trying to do in creation, and by what method He is trying to do it.

Just as, in the early Church, men were better able to understand what God "taking upon Him" humanity meant when they realised that Jew and Greek, savage and alien, master and slave, were all one; just as from the fact that on the Gentiles also was poured out the Spirit they argued the greatness of the Christ whom at first they had recognised only as the Jewish Messiah; so from the fact that we now know ourselves to be only an incident in the vaster creative process we are bound to argue that the manifestation of God in Christ shows God's righteousness as a taking of responsibility for the whole vast creative process, as having respect for all the free life He has made, as having fellowship with all joy and all suffering and all sin, and as having eternal patience and love beyond our utmost stretch of thought.

If the Christ was the manifestation of complete oneness of the divine will and the human will, the action and passion of the Christ must have been the manifestation of the eternal action and passion of the Creator. If God is not reconciling the whole of His terrestrial creation to His own way, bringing earthly life into the full expression of the character He first conceived for it, by suffering in its waywardness, loving it into obedience without exerting physical or moral coercion, the doctrine of the Atonement is to-day inadequate as an explanation of God's attitude toward His whole living creation of which man is so intimate a part. But if this is the way in which God deals with His creatures, it behoves man thus to deal with all his fellow-creatures, realising that the Creator suffers with them until evil is overcome of good.

It may be objected to this view that all we have to do, in order to narrow back our ways of thought to older ways, is to insist that there is instilled into men at birth a spirit or personality which is not the fruition of terrestrial evolution but something of quite another origin, and that the manifestation of God in Christ has reference only to this His more direct and more lofty creation of human spirits. I think the difficulties of this view are enormous, as shown by the analytical ingenuity needed by its learned exponents. Of course that does not prove it untrue; the difficulties for reasonable faith of assimilating new knowledge must always be enormous; but the real question is whether this compromise with science does not create more difficulties than it

removes. Since we have ceased to believe that the particular human body of each man on earth will be the temple of his spirit through all eternity, since we are bound to believe that our human faculties have developed by the same process as the faculties of the animals, which is only another form of the process by which the trees grow and crystals are formed, it certainly requires more evidence to establish a presumption that man's spirit is a special creation than it did before these steps were taken. Advancing knowledge has given us no more evidence to support this view, although intuitive faith has tried nobly to force a way down this path of thought, calling in many an ancient speculation to uphold Christianity. To me it seems that there are other avenues opening out to the religious life which show that the path of truth lies in another direction.

What hope is it that now nerves our arms and stimulates our brains in the effort to combat disease and physical misery and the moral evil inseparable from certain forms of ignorance or physical imperfections? How far are we to go? Where are we to stop? The whole outburst of effort to improve the conditions of humanity, to manipulate animal life and vegetable life into higher conditions, that has followed upon the rapid increase of scientific knowledge, has not as yet found any recognised place in Christian theology. No one is now prepared to say that the terrestrial conditions of the race have nothing to do with its spiritual progress. Dirt, ugliness, disease, and sin we know, if we are not wilfully

blind, to be, in any community, convertible into one another, as are light and heat and motion ; so that as we are not prepared to regard the terrestrial environment as of no significance whatever, we dare not set a limit to its significance. Do we imagine ourselves rid of evil conditions? As long as there is one neighbour lying wounded by evil circumstance, the command of our own good hearts is to go forward. Do we fancy that we are self-commissioned? Is it not the command of God? Do we dare so to travesty goodness as to doubt that the command is His? Is it not also a promise?

Of what is it a promise? Of a muddle of good and evil as long as earth shall last? An odd promise that for the Divine Husbandman! But it would seem—to hear much pious discussion on this matter—that God is supposed to set us our task much as we set our tramps to carry stones from one side of the workhouse-yard to another with no useful result in view. God knows us better than we know the poor. He knows the frame of our mind; He remembers that we are intelligent. Not in purposeless work can the best character be formed, and it is only in the rich soil of hope that the seeds of undying purpose can germinate. Difficult, exceedingly difficult as it is for the average mind to think of earth as anything but a muddle of bad and good, difficult as it is for the optimist to perceive the awful stench of wickedness and anguish that goes up from earth to heaven, difficult as it is for the pessimist to open his eyes to the fires of

holy joy that are blazing everywhere in heart and hearth, easy as it is for all of us to imagine a past, or a present, or a future of terrestrial conditions which has no reality, and form obstinate theories on the basis of such imagination, as Christians we must gird up the loins of our minds and think soberly of the coming of that Kingdom in which God's will is to be done on earth.

Either God in Christ has not set His hand to the plough of a triumphant terrestrial evolution, or, having done so, He will not turn back. If all the change in earthly conditions since the earliest geological period be a chance, an accident, or if we can trace no improvement in these conditions, if life and love are not better than the dust, then we are at liberty to believe that our salvation is only a question of the disentanglement of spirit from the world of sense. But if the Incarnation and the Atonement have any significance in interpreting this process of evolution, if they be indeed the revelation that divine Spirit seeks no such disentanglement but seeks rather closer union with sensuous creation, we are driven gladly to believe that every human institution, every department of earthly life, is to be made wholesome and helpful to the perfecting of the whole.

CHAPTER XVI

CHRISTIAN POWER

The "will to power" is divine, and is essential to humanity.

Jesus proclaimed the way of Divine meekness as the only way to attain true power.

The scientist has discovered the method of meek obedience to be the only way to power over nature; and the Gospel says the same method in social life must bring about the reign of God.

Only by using the Divine method can men share the Divine joy of real power, of permanent conquest.

In their absolute refusal to see in current world-powers the Kingdom of God the early Christians converted half the world.

Love, and the service of love, have always been the culmination of the mystic vision; but the inconsistent belief that evil has to be first overthrown by Divine violence has caused Christians in practice to modify the ethic of Jesus, while the Kingdom tarries.

The Christians of the first century looked for the speedy coming of the new order by the direct power of God.

Later the church learned that human co-operation with God was needed, but in learning it lost sight of the main characteristic of her power and resorted to violence.

The Crusades illustrate this.

The contradictory ideals thus involved were to be realised, the one as a universal church on earth, to be fought for; the other as a perfect state in heaven, to be gained by the Christian temper.

Through long experience Christians are coming to see that the fighting spirit must be dropped and the meekness of Jesus must conquer the world.

The practical problem is how to live in present conditions so as to bring in the perfect state.

Parallel between the missionary in a non-Christian land and the early Christians. Their common methods and common success suggest a way of solving our problem.

Each generation must be ready to cast off elements of the current world as it comes to recognise them as inconsistent with the Christian spirit.

The Christian attitude towards such questions as the use of the military to keep order in a railway strike.

The mysterious power of the method of Jesus is evident to-day in the few who consistently adhere to that method.

This power is inconsistent with fear.

CHAPTER XVI

CHRISTIAN POWER

THERE can be no question that the "will to power" is divine. The "will to power" is essential to free intelligence, and therefore to humanity; and Jesus came, not to disclaim power, but to proclaim that the only way to obtain power is the way of divine meekness. From the genius of the world-soul in the throes of a great religious discovery we get the latest portrait of Jesus before the agent of the Roman power; Jesus is saying, "My Kingdom—the Kingdom of God—is not of this world. If my Kingdom were of this world then would my servants fight." On the one side the power of the current world, which Jesus rejected, had its basis in physical force; on the other, the power of the age to come, which Jesus affirmed, had its basis in love. The cross, because it was the complete rejection of the current world, was the great affirmation of a world to come.

The secret of power which Jesus revealed has been already learned by the scientist. The man of science used to try to coerce the forces of

nature according to his notion of what they ought to do, and science remained ineffective; when he discovered that he must enter his Kingdom like a little child, learning meekly to work with nature, learning to love nature, the result was a great outburst of power.

The Gospel tells us that in social life the same method will have the same result. According to our hypothesis of creation, in the earthly consummation when the will of God is done on earth as it is in heaven, every inhabitant of earth will be engaged in subduing some unsubdued part of creation; and his method will be the method of gentleness, the power he wields will be the power of love. If we suppose that all the energy in this universe must ultimately (if we can use the word "ultimately") be translated into free intelligence, and all be subdued to God, it is certain that until then every human intelligence that emerges from partial separation from God into full co-operation with Him will have a career of infinite conquest; and the method must be the method of Omnipotence—the method of voluntary servitude to the freedom of the life to be served, in order to make the thing to be conquered as strong and as great as possible. There will be no moment in all that career of conquest in which every man will not need to live out the beatitudes of Jesus—to forgive with long-suffering, and to give without measure, as God is always forgiving, and suffering the persecutions of the unruly, and giving lavish gifts.

Thus only can men experience the infinite and

unutterable joy of God, the joy of the only real power, the joy of real conquest and always greater conquest. What is conquered in this way is permanently righted, made permanently honourable, permanently united to the conqueror; by any other method what appears to be the conquest of good is only a temporary extension of wrong. This is identical with the gospel message. If in any sense Jesus was the power of God, or revealed the power of God, or indicated the power of God, it is certain that in His victorious course Divine Power does not strive nor cry, nor break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking wick, nor punish according to desert. The difference between men in whom the power of God is and is not operative is that the latter seek to subdue by violence what the former actually subdue by love. The ethic of the beatitudes is the reign of God.

The early Christians converted half the world in the great impetus obtained by an absolute refusal to recognise the current world-powers as the Kingdom of God. The world that represented God was in the future; it differed entirely from anything actual; in it the civic virtues were to be summed up in obedience to the Messiah who had come "not to be ministered unto, but to minister"; it was that same Messiah who, they believed, would reign over them. This was no new doctrine, but a development of what had almost become trite as the expression of exalted hours of religious inspiration. "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity. . . . I will dwell with him that is of a humble spirit" (Isa. lvii. 15).

"Though the Lord be high he hath respect unto the lowly, but the proud he knoweth afar" (Ps. cxxxviii. 6). "The meek will he teach his way" (Ps. xxv. 9). "What doth God require of thee, but to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God" (Mic. vi. 8). The Septuagint had made these expressions the common food of those who were thirsty for high ideals. More than that, the experience out of which they came had become the experience of thousands living here and there, isolated or in groups, through the Roman world,—men whose prayers and almsdeeds had made them familiar with the revelation that comes to the humble heart which, in its thirst to see wrong righted, begins, albeit unconsciously, to be the agent of the righteousness it craves. To such as these in the early Church it would have been a manifest absurdity to conceive the Kingdom as embracing warfare, or the motives of fear, or pride, or selfishness which cause warfare. Love which casteth out fear, and the service of love —these are the culmination of the mystic vision, whatever form its expression may take. But inconsistency lay in the belief that evil was first to be overthrown by divine violence.

While the Kingdom tarried there was certainly a sort of conduct required which was a modification of the ethic of the Kingdom. While even before the Kingdom came men must have the virtues classed together in the beatitudes, along with these some degree of conformity to the moribund world was necessary. A sentence from the Synoptics cuts like a knife, dividing the

temporary from the eternal ethic, "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

In the first century of the Christian Church there were some rulers, soldiers, civil servants, merchants, and slaves in its ranks. In this epoch when the Church made such vast progress, laying everywhere in Europe the foundations of a new civilisation, the Christian who served Cæsar did so willing only to further what was good or not positively bad in a system that was at the best merely temporary. In his thought the nations whose servants fought were already in the past, doomed by God. The outlook was a confused and inconsistent vision, such as light shining in half-comprehending darkness will always produce, a vision of heaven-sent destruction and restoration, in which the impenitent—emperor and slave together—were to perish by the power of God, in order that the poor, the humble, the Christlike should reign.

The Church slowly learned later that the new order would not come about without human co-operation. That was a step in advance, but the Christian in learning it lost sight of the main characteristic of God's Kingdom. Farther down the ages we get a good illustration of this in the Crusades. The battle-cry, "*Deus vult*"—of which the one good result, the knowledge of pagan civilisation, was a by-product—produced much futile fury and wasteful carnage. The Crusades stand in sharp contrast with all the economical missionary enterprise of the first centuries of

the Church. The root of the mistake clearly was the belief that violence was necessary to the righting of wrong ; that it was God's method to use it ; that in so far as Jesus had not endorsed it He did not adequately reveal God ; and that in so far as His ethic did not teach it He had omitted the necessary civic virtues. In the Middle Ages they said this in a different way from the way it is the fashion to say it now, but that was evidently what they thought. Now, the difference between the sword as wielded by the early Christian in the Roman army and the sword as wielded by the later Christian is full of terrible import. The one in wielding his sword was paying his tax to a moribund power, full of hope that if he personally could keep from his heart the motives condemned by Jesus, he would soon rejoice in the perfect working of God's will as supernaturally applied to the righting of all wrong ; the other believed that in every blow he struck he was expressing the will of God, however horrible and cruel his butcheries. This brought into sharp relief the inconsistency unconsciously held in earlier stages of the Church. If it was the nature of God to deal violently with men who opposed His purposes, man in co-operation with God must likewise deal violently with those who, he thinks, oppose God's purposes. Hence the Church became a persecuting power. It is impossible to have two masters—a God who uses physical might to assert right, and a God who endorses the example and teaching of the Gospels —a man must serve one or the other. This was being gradually seen, and consequently it had been

decided that some men should serve the one God and some the other. As, however, the priest must endorse the soldier, and the soldier the priest, what resulted was probably quite as much a genuine bewilderment of mind as what has passed into history as a great corruption of behaviour. We learn to walk by falling; it is God's way with all life; underneath are the everlasting arms.

Although it is always possible for human reason to assert plausible reconciliations of contradictory ideals, they cannot be realised together. The natural result of worshipping a self-contradictory God was a division of the Kingdom of God. Part of it was to be realised in this world as a universal ecclesiastical polity—this was to be fought for; but another part, the perfect state, was to be removed to a heavenly distance, and this could only be won by a Christlike temper of heart.

Alas! Christian temper thus became, for the majority of priests and laymen, a psychological impossibility. Men are suggestible beings; many of their mental and emotional processes go on without their direct volition, products of the life-purpose. It is quite impossible for a man to give his whole-hearted adhesion to warfare—whether of the sword, the purse, or the spoken or written word—and preserve a Christlike attitude of heart. As the fighting spirit was required of the would-be saint, it became necessary to lower the ideal of the Christ-like temper. Christian forgiveness has become too often a synonym for malice, yet even in this malice there is a soul of good. Through it all,

certainly, the attraction of Jesus Christ, or, as the Modernist would have it, the marvellous attraction of the Jesus myth, has so drawn the heart of Christendom that, little by little, and more and more, saints and heroes and common men have realised that because God's Kingdom was not of this current world, His servants by participating in the fighting spirit cease to serve Him, and enter another and more terrible servitude. Also the inexhaustible attraction of Jesus Christ has brought us, albeit with slow and unwilling minds, back to the realisation that He in His meekness shall triumph on this earth as Judge and King.

But all the time it has been, and is, necessary to practise the ethic of the time between, to render to Cæsar what is his. The democracy, or commercial system, or political party—whatever institution is at the moment demanding tribute from any Christian—must have its due. It is only a fanatic that seeks to live in an environment that does not exist, and we have gradually learned that our problem is to discover how the Christian may so live in the imperfect environment of the present as to produce the perfect environment of the future.

There is a certain amount of evidence that points to one main line of solution. The extraordinary expansion and vigour of the Church in the first centuries of our era has only been equalled by the extraordinary expansion and vigour of foreign missions in our own day. The various departments of Christendom to which these successful modern missions belong have no corresponding

power where they are at home in countries nominally Christian. At home, their church edifices are rather becoming more empty than more full, and the surrounding population to which they ought to minister holds aloof, uncomprehended and uncomprehending. The foreign missionary is like the early Christian in this respect—he is sure that the world in which he labours—the current system of customs and laws, of commercial unscrupulousness and political compromise and military violence—is doomed; a new régime, which he calls Christianity, is to take its place. He pays his tax, *i.e.* he conforms, as far as need be, with law and custom; he does not arbitrarily interfere with widespread evils in civic and military life; but his whole enthusiasm is given to building up men, believing that these in their turn will rear sons to be pillars in a new commonwealth whose builder and maker is God. Here we get the recognition, not only that the ideal kingdom is at hand, but that it is to be brought about with human co-operation.

Again, the missionary in a non-Christian country to-day resembles the early Christian in that he cannot, even if he would, use might to enforce what he believes to be right. He cannot call in the police; he cannot use the bitter word to beat up party spirit into big majorities; it would be futile for him to insult those who oppose him by publicly attributing to them the worst of motives; still less can he bring to bear any form of physical revenge. However narrow and bigoted he may be, however uncharitable he may naturally

be, he is bound to go gently. And whenever he has allowed himself to be identified with the military power he has failed.

I think the fulness of life manifested in the earliest period of the Church and in foreign missions to-day justifies us in dwelling upon these points they have in common, which at the same time differentiate them from the Christian work within Christendom to-day. The foreign missionary, because like the early Christian he looks for a new and God-appointed order, and because in endeavouring to bring that about he is bound, like the early Christian, to be gentle in his methods, can hold up the Christ with some reality, for he is not seeking to vitiate Christ's incomparable consistency by trying to harmonise it with an antagonistic system which must also be upheld.

The Christ needs to be allowed to move more freely, to breathe more deeply, among us than He can do if the central thoughts of His life—"The Kingdom of God is at hand," "The gentle shall inherit the earth"—are forgotten.

It is, unfortunately, far from trite to repeat, "It is not easy to be a Christian," or even "It is not vainglorious to be a Christian." The habit of building a little Christian practice as an ornament or a fire-escape on to a palace of ease or a tower of worldly ambition has largely unchristianised Christendom. Yet Christendom is to-day the home of thousands of the true-hearted, who are consciously upheld by the risen Christ in lives of self-sacrifice. To make these lives powerful it

is necessary that the Church should realise that the problem of how far the current, nominally Christian, world is a part of the foundations of the coming Kingdom is never solved, must always be being solved. It is of less than no use to look to the past for the decision of to-day ; we can look to the past only for principles which may help in decision, and in order to note those trends of change which seem marked by the fullest life. And always we must be sure, quite sure, that in every generation certain elements in the current world which are held in combination with the true Christian spirit will in the next generation be found to be inconsistent with it and to have become the badge of a dead religion.

We have all recently had before us an illustration of the difficulties of government in a would-be Christian state. In the general strike of railway servants the military were despatched to various railway centres to keep order. I am quite incapable of judging whether this was desirable or undesirable, but I want to assume, for the sake of argument, that it was of possible courses the least evil. But how great a gulf lies between two sorts of Englishmen who endorse this action ! The one sort believes it to be right because they believe force to be the only basis of power this world can ever know. Human nature, they say, has always been, will always be the same ; the bulk of the masses will always be ignorant, easily swayed by the mob-spirit, and must always be dominated by force at such times for their own good. Such domination they regard,

if they be Christians, as the will of God. The other sort of men consent to use the power of arms in such a case as the best that can be at the moment, convinced that the best is sorry work, that the need for coercion ought not to exist, and that a state that is not pushing on to something better, not pushing on to a condition in which ignorance and vice will no longer exist, is already doomed to destruction.

The same action is thus consistent with divergent lines of thought.

Among those who hold the last-named view there are some who believe that the power of God in Christ will soon bring about this better state of things, and they rest not day nor night in their efforts to bring it about. Among these faithful, unresting workers there are some who are convinced that they must do this work only by methods of gentleness, crushing the fighting spirit "like a vice of blood upon the threshold of the mind," generously imputing only high motives to their opponents, joyfully sacrificing all that they have and are in working out the Christian ideals. Such men as these last do not need warfare to give them ennobling purpose, to teach them self-sacrifice and heroism, to exercise their nobler impulses or the thews and sinews of their physical frame. Their heroism, their power of brotherhood, their very physical force, is on a higher plane, as we well know. They not only deny the current world, but affirm that the kingdom at hand is the Kingdom of God and of His Christ ; while at the same time they are more loyal to all that is good

in the current world than its own most infatuated votaries. It is possible that it is only these few among us who are true sons of the Kingdom ; but in any case it is certain that in them resides a power as great as it is mysterious.

In seeking this power we must above all things have done with fear. Fear of man always bears the fruit of cruelty to man. Fear always fights. Every temptation to fight for our rights is the call of God to make some sacrifice on which the fire of heaven's power will descend.

CHAPTER XVII

CHRISTIAN ENTERPRISE

The life Jesus came to give was a positive, energising force ; and the Church would have better represented her Lord had she emphasised positive rather than negative commandments.

For the abounding life of God received by a man is ample to produce full positive activity of all his powers.

The attitude and teaching of the Church on the question of marriage is an illustration of this mistake.

We judge all healthy life, not according to the sins omitted, but according to the positive goodness and enterprise manifested, and our highest praise for such enterprise is that it has originality.

Christianity, if better than other religions, must differ from them in giving greater stimulus to positive good of all sorts and to the encouragement of enterprise and originality in the work of moulding men to higher purposes.

The older view was that God revealed exact instructions as to the work He wanted done (as Moses received the pattern of the Tabernacle in the mount), but we have discovered that God does not thus use mechanical purpose toward humanity. Jesus gave His disciples principles of action and the stimulus of a new life, and left the method of applying principles to their own genius, enriched by the mystic vision.

We only remain commonplace in our piety and stereotyped in our methods because, from fear of a hard God, we wrap our religious genius in a napkin, content to remain without the multiplied product of spiritual enterprise, not realising that God is guarantor for all positive effort, however great its apparent failure.

The early Church learned from its Lord that the force of God was bringing to them the Kingdom ; hence the responsibility for it was not on them, and they were free to fit men for its coming.

If to-day the responsibility for bringing in the Kingdom is man's, Jesus has misled His church. We may have misunderstood time and method, but the teaching of Jesus is plain—that God in Christ comes to mankind, not that mankind has to travel painfully to find God. That is our sufficient warrant for ceaseless enterprise in the effort to fit men to abide in that day.

All that makes for fulness of life is preparation for the Kingdom. The marvellous works ascribed to Jesus are an epitome of the activities the world-soul feels essential to salvation ; and God being a faithful Creator, we must believe that what He teaches the world-soul to aspire to is its proper goal.

Then what Jesus was and did is a promise for the future condition and power of mankind ; and just in so far as men work as He did to fit men's bodies and minds for the coming Kingdom, so far may they count on being inspired and inwrought by God.

CHAPTER XVII

CHRISTIAN ENTERPRISE

THE author of the Fourth Gospel, with his deeply spiritual insight, sums up the principle of Christianity by representing our Lord as saying, "I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly."

It is interesting to try to imagine what would have been the result if the Christian Church had from the first laid upon positive commandments the emphasis that it has laid upon the mere negations which embody more primitive morality. A place in Church ritual was needed for the historic repetition of these; but if in constant repetition at her most sacred service, and in the catechism of the young, the Church had impressed upon the imaginations of her members good things lively and affectionate to be done, instead of bad things not to be done, we cannot doubt that the moral standards of to-day would be different. Would they be worse?

The duty owing to God and the neighbour might have been woven into the warp and woof of generations by a Christian version of the Jewish

commandments. Monotheism once established, the Church, instead of continuing to condemn the ancient belief in multiple deities and the magical significance of images and of sacred names, thus symbolising the attractions of wickedness to the mystification of the ignorant, might have ceased to emphasise the old commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," and said plainly, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with the same real affection that thou givest to good people and good things, and love Him better than all these." And in like manner it might have taught, "Thou shalt learn concerning the heart and mind and purpose of God by studying the life of Jesus Christ." "Thou shalt think constantly of God as good and the author of all good." "Thou shalt set apart one day in seven as a festival on which especially to exemplify God's love to man." "Thou shalt honour thy father and thy mother by making their wisdom thy starting-place and not thy goal." "Thou shalt forgive thy neighbour when he sins against thee, yea, unto seventy times seven." "Thou shalt always reverence little children, and from youth to age do all that in thee lies to make marriage honourable, and thy own home and every other happy." "Thou shalt share all that thou hast with thy needy neighbour." "Thou shalt never lose an opportunity of saying all thou canst truly say in honour of thy neighbour." "Thou shalt help thy neighbour to obtain all that he may of the goods of this world and rejoice in his joy."

If to some such commandments as these our

race had for centuries responded with daily prayers for the grace of performance, can any one suppose that more blasphemies, more murders, more robberies, more sexual immoralities, more false swearing, and more covetousness than we have at present would have resulted? Crudely as positive commandments are here outlined, do they not suffice to indicate what might have been done if the councils of the Church had used time and thought and inspiration to the casting of them into the best embodiment that words could give? If the homilies of the Church had been directed to the practical application of such positive commandments, would not the Church have been like that wise mother who provides pleasant and useful occupation for little restless, mischievous hands?

There are many other departments of life in regard to which we still hear only constant negations and fault-finding; adequate popular positive teaching is frequently confined to the subject of devotional practices and devotional giving. Of course such teaching is of supreme importance because there can be no progress, personal or corporate, without the personal revelation that is best interpreted in moments of conscious worship; but no one can take into consideration the concrete life without perceiving that positive activities in one direction can never have the highest degree of nobility and stability if they are not balanced by such other positive activities as may draw forth the best possibilities of the whole nature. A man, for example, is not a better father because his idea of citizenship is merely not to break the laws; nor

is a man a better citizen because his only idea of industry is not to interrupt other men's business. Rather, a man is a better father because he applies himself to the duties of citizenship, and a man is a better citizen because he industriously follows some occupation of his own. And, in general, the more the ways in which a man's nature positively fulfils itself the better will be his fatherhood and his citizenship, provided his energies are rightly directed. In the same way, that man will put the greatest fulness of life into religious habits who puts the greatest originality and enterprise into his virtues. The ethic of the kingdom does not proceed upon the theory that life is scant. To teach only certain things positively and others negatively is to regard a man's energy as a trickling stream, which can only be made effective by being carefully directed into one, or at most two channels, leaving all other natural channels of its outflow to run dry. To regard it thus is to fail to comprehend Christianity, which, if it is anything, is the coming of humanity into closer connection with the Source of abounding life.

Even now, when the science of pedagogy has given us the kindergarten, when the science of hygiene has taught us that hearty toil and hearty sport, eating with relish and sleeping soundly, are of more avail for health and physical morality than all virtues of omission, how very little do the champions of orthodox Christian morality apply the deep principle that at the very root of Christianity divides it from all primitive moralities! Christianity proclaimed, "Thou shalt," in lieu of

"Thou shalt not." Life is a positive outflow whose character defines its form. It is only in the artificial that we get beauty by chopping away.

For example, we hear nowadays very much about the fact that the Church has a higher ideal of marriage than the world; marriage with a deceased wife's sister and marriage of divorced persons are condemned; but how very little do we hear from the pulpit of the ideal marriage, of the positive benefits of the sort of love required for it, of the joy with which every boy and girl should look forward to, and prepare for, this aspect of life! How little do we hear of the ideal relations that should exist between all men and women in order that the young may grow up in a social and economic atmosphere in which this ideal love may freely develop. To what extent is the great and riveting theme which enthrals the young—and all men as long as the heart is young—in lyric and drama, and is the heart of modern fiction—to what extent is this theme developed by the Church into the positive glory of Christian life? If individual preachers hesitate to approach this sacred subject it is evidently because they have not been taught in what way this may and ought to be done. We cannot suppose that it is beyond the wisdom of applied theology, beyond the inspiration that waits upon the prayer and holy enterprise of the corporate religious mind, to devise how it may be done. If all this is not done the warmest imagery of the youthful heart is left a fallow field, and in the very centre of living Christian orthodoxy there is a great sin of omission,

greater in God's sight, may be, than any of those sins of commission on the stage, in the press, and in private life, which we are all so ready to denounce.

Christianity from the first set affirmation of the righteous life over against the current moral negations of our Lord's day; and looking through the length and breadth of our knowledge we realise that this is always the characteristic that expresses the distinction between the abounding life of the more advanced type and the simpler life of a less developed type. As physical life comes on in the scale of development it depends very much less upon "thou shalt not." Thus, man, if he does not get one sort of food eats another; if he does not get one sort of climate he lives in another; he can adapt to his use what appears destructive. But nearly all the animals that we call lower than man are dependent upon many more negations; if they are graminivorous they cannot eat flesh; if they are accustomed to heat they cannot live in cold. There seems to be something akin to this in the moral sphere, so that, while for a little child or a dog what they do or do not do is all-important, it is a common saying about well-developed characters that it matters less what they do than how they do it. Thus, we are all accustomed to the idea that criminal law does not touch the life of a mature and healthy character. We do not estimate such an one by the fact that he does not commit murder or does not steal. We speak of men being little or great, insignificant or important, according to the degree of strength and persistence that they

have or have not shown in any virtuous positive activity. Beyond strength and persistence, we require in any complex endeavour that men should show enterprise—that is, energy in pushing on with new combinations of thought and activity to ends which cannot be entirely foreseen ; and the best thing we can say of any man with persistence and enterprise is that he is original, that there is some quality in his enterprise that is more than a new combination of methods previously tried, a subtile something all his own.

If, therefore, Christianity was something new in the world, something better and higher than had been before, it stands to reason that it must have differed from other religions chiefly in the stimulus and inspiration it gave to positive good of all sorts, to the strength that it gave to the purpose of men who were artists in the living material of humanity, endeavouring to bring about in men health and beauty and genius and love, to the force it gave to the enterprise with which they carried out their purpose and the originality of their work.

Long ago men thought that if God wanted anything to be done in this world He would reveal an exact pattern for the work. We know the tradition of the tabernacle, how everything was done according to the pattern revealed to Moses on the mount. We know the tradition of the translation of the Septuagint, how seventy men were supposed to have been shut up in separate cells, and each to have completed an identical translation by divine inspiration. But we have

discovered that these stories were simply efforts to insist that God worked as men thought He ought, employing mechanical purpose toward humanity, and we have discovered that God does not work in that way. What maps of the world were given to the Galilean fishermen to guide their conquest of it? What details of their plan of campaign? What definite instruction as to even the beginning of their operations, when, stunned and broken by the collapse of all their worldly hopes, they were obliged to build up a new life for themselves and others on the ruins of their own fond expectations? We have the record of certain commands—such as, *e.g.*, to cry everywhere that the Kingdom of heaven was at hand, to accept the kindness that those who welcomed the cry would show, to accept the anger and violence that it is in the nature of most men to deal out to those who interfere with their prejudices and preoccupations, the command not to prepare their defence because it would be given them to know what to say only in the hour of need. Such simple expressions of the principles on which they must act, together with the inward, wordless stimulus of the new life, sent them forward. The how and the where and the when of their response to the need of the world was determined by their own initiative, just as the subjugation of the field, just as the establishment of order with freedom in civic institutions, has been left to the age-long initiative of mankind. The hesitation and divergence of the apostles upon essential matters proves how much was left to their own

religious genius. What seems to have distinguished the Christian apostle was not a more detailed knowledge of God's whole plan of salvation, but a more perfect harmony of individual spirit with the divine Spirit, the consequent enrichment of the mystic vision of love and order and beauty, and a clearer intimation of its application to each hour and circumstance.

If we believe in human immortality, it seems to me simplest to believe that this enrichment of the mystic vision, this more perfect harmony of the individual human will with the divine, arose not only from the revelation of the divine nature in the historic Jesus—a revelation at the time very dimly understood—but from communion, not of course verbal or pictorial, with the risen Christ, and also from communion—wordless also, felt rather than understood—with those others, living and dying, who had received the same fresh impulse of life. Personally, I find it impossible to believe that, for example, the soul of St. Stephen after his martyrdom did not continue to exercise some mediatory power between the will of God and the human understanding of his brethren. Wherever a human soul may find its next field of activity, its power of thought cannot be more restricted or less forceful than it was in this world. But with regard to the inspiration which the Christian receives from the divine Spirit focused in the risen Christ, brought nearer to our level by every intense missionary soul that enters the unseen, I cannot see that we have the slightest evidence to prove that this inspiration comes to us in any

concrete translation. The utmost activity of trial and error, of meditation, of enterprise and initiation, is required of us before the inspiration can be translated into concrete life. St. Paul's "Then shall I know even as also I have been known," "that I may apprehend that for which also I was apprehended," suggest the necessary questioning attitude of the human mind towards the mystic vision. Only by trying and failing and trying again can mankind push forward in any quest, acquiring thus more and more fully at every step the attributes of life—humility, persistence in enterprise, and originality; and Christianity, if it is the fullest life, must obey the same law.

Why are we commonplace? Why is our piety stereotyped? Why do our alms-deeds follow one another in barren conformity? Because our religious spontaneity is wrapped in a napkin, buried in the ground. We are half dead from fear of a hard God; we are afraid of high failure, and imagine God is better pleased with the low, paltry success of giving Him back the life He gave us untainted by error or folly or failure, without gain—without newness or novelty of personal life to delight God, without the multiplied product of spiritual enterprise. If the gospel teaches us anything it is that God is guarantor for all the human effort that makes for good of any sort, however great its apparent failure. The gates of hell shall not prevail against what is good, because the overcoming of evil is the contest of God; God cannot be God without rising victor out of contest. The Incarnation is the guarantee

of the triumph of all earthly good, just as the living God is the assurance of the triumph of universal good. To believe that human progress toward order and freedom, to believe that Christian progress toward the higher realisation of these, can at any time be wiped out by a relapse into barbarism or paganism, is not compatible with Christian faith.

The belief which the early Church in some way derived from Jesus was that the Kingdom of God and Christ was coming to them, coming upon them, by the force of God. Hence the burden of responsibility for it was not on them ; this burden would have crushed them. Their part was to make all who would receive the Kingdom fit for its coming; and their whole activities were set free to perform this work, because not only was God in Christ working in them, but God in Christ was coming toward them to establish with power what they proclaimed.

The whole body of Christian doctrine must stand or fall on the essential truth or untruth of this doctrine. If the responsibility of bringing Christ as a reigning power to the world is man's, if man have anything more to do than prepare earth with joyful certainty for the Kingdom that is coming from heaven, the expectation which Jesus implanted in the Christian society is essentially untrue. Time and method may have been misunderstood, but if in any real sense this expectation was correct it means that God in Christ comes to mankind, not that mankind travels painfully to a far country to find God. "Let your loins be

girded and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord." "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh." "Behold I come quickly."

I have been arguing that increasing fitness for the Kingdom involves increasing establishment of the environing conditions of the Kingdom, that the coming is therefore a process, not a crisis; but what I would fix our minds on here is that the Kingdom is something that comes toward us from the unseen God, and that the power by which it moves is God's. That is the sufficient warrant and encouragement for enterprise, ceaseless activity and originality in all those efforts that shall make men fit to abide in that day.

I do not think we can doubt that whatever makes for fulness of life is preparation for the Kingdom. The religious world-soul has always demanded of its saviours the healing of the sick, the feeding of the hungry, the blossoming of the desert, the exaltation of the good and wise, the defeat of oppression. In that age of illumination when what we call our Christian civilisation had its birth in pagan decadence, the soul of the Church certainly postulated all these elements in the Christ-life. The question as to whether the marvellous works ascribed to Jesus were fact or myth does not touch the undoubted truth that they were not only a vivid summary of just what the whole ancient world had required as salvation, but were a perfect epitome of all that science has achieved, or promises to achieve, for the world, and of all that mysticism proclaims to be divine. If,

then, we are to believe that God is a faithful Creator, that He is the instructor of men in all their aspirations, that He taught them to aspire as an eagle teaches its young, stirring up the nest and casting them out, hovering over them on the watch, swooping under to bear them up when they fall—if this is our conception of God we shall be safe, I think, in believing that that which the world-soul in its aspiration constantly esteems to be essential to human salvation is essential to it. I believe that the activities of the Jesus of the Gospel story are the activities of God in the world, and that just in so far as men engage in them they are inspired and inwrought by God in Christ, but I do not believe that anything actually happened to our Lord, or by His power, which is not a promise for the future condition and power of mankind.

To make men fit for the coming Kingdom their bodies and minds must march together in a common progress, and the mental and physical environment must be that which responds to the progressive life. Salvation is never static, never uniform; it is the progressive revelation of God who in His relation to creation is the force that makes for exuberance of life.

CHAPTER XVIII

CHRISTIAN UNITY

We assume in the universe a unity of purpose.

Hence we assume that things and persons sharing a common nature have a community of origin and destiny.

Analysis of the nature of the unity possible to persons.

Illustrated in the low form of unity possible to devils—*i.e.* the unconscious and involuntary unity of centres of a common life, which all receive and emit similar impulses. The devil, being degenerate, tends to greater sameness with his fellows and to incapacity for conscious union.

All Christians necessarily have the lower degree of involuntary and unconscious union with each other, for they receive and transmit similar impulses; but the higher degree of union, conscious and voluntary, with some outward organisation, is necessary for efficiency.

The Christian life tends to ever greater variety and ever closer union.

Christendom has always recognised need of union.

Three epochs in history of Christendom :—

(*a*) That of embryonic and unrecognised divergence.

(*b*) That of the use of constraint to suppress divergence.

(*c*) That of recognised divergence and lack of voluntary union.

The achievement of voluntary union with adequate scope for variety still lies before the Church.

The "things of God" thus demanding the greatest distinction and closest union in men, we may find an explanation of Christian disunion in our mistaken conception of "the things of God" for which religious parties fight.

Looking impartially, we can usually see that in such controversy God is on both sides, while He can only identify Himself fully with that divine ideal of right embodied in the life of Jesus and with the coming Kingdom which is its fulfilment.

In so far as we can discover and practise the righteousness that belongs to that Kingdom we shall realise the real unity in diversity of all faithful men.

Misinterpreting "the things of God," we have missed the significance of the Cross, not seeing that to suffer with the world has always been the glory of God.

A religion and civilisation concentrated on the defence of a good already attained were bound to be opposed to a forward-looking Christ.

Peter, wishing earthly power and honour for his Lord, was in effect desiring to see Him take sides in the current clash of right and wrong.

Jesus stood for the faith that the taint of evil was over all the current world, that hope lay in the coming of the perfect reign of God. In compelling His crucifixion He attested this faith by His death.

We are therefore bound to believe that God sides with an ideal righteousness just beyond our sight, which all men alike fail to reach, whence the folly of judgment and condemnation among men is evident; we see also that God shows Himself in Jesus as abiding most with those who suffer most under His own gift of freedom, those who are condemned and outcast by a world itself condemned by God but not cast out from God.

The outlook on the Kingdom implies that no reverse can come to any institution except from its own inward evil. It follows that it is useless to fight against a menacing force; internal reform is the only safeguard.

Further, if we realise that God suffers with those whom we condemn or ostracise or punish, we must, at the expense of our own rights and dignity, find some other way of winning them.

CHAPTER XVIII

CHRISTIAN UNITY

We have seen reason to believe the universe to be a unity in a deeper sense than our empirical knowledge proclaims, because we believe it to be the outcome of one divine purpose, and to be tending to the fulfilment of that one purpose. Because of this purpose every class of things or persons must have unity both of origin and destiny. For instance, even devils, if there be devils, must have between themselves a kind of unity. Having made the choice, "Evil, be thou my good," the creature is *ipso facto* in union with all other creatures who have made the same choice. The common purpose to make evil as effective as possible would be the uniting telepathic bond without will to unite or consciousness of union. The universe is one; the existence of every new centre of spontaneous good or evil probably sets in motion forces which intensify good or evil in all other centres sensitive to them. We may conceive that such a union of devils would more quickly bring about the disintegration of each devil's spiritual personality, thus setting free the

life energy that came from God to join the latent energy of the universe and so work its way up again. We may picture this as God's way of permitting devils to resist His will while they subserve it, observing that the devils' will is thus working under the same universal law as the godly will must work.

But the godly will is *ex hypothesi* the channel of fuller life and therefore tends to ever greater and greater variety, and at the same time to ever closer unity, while the devils' will must, by the same law, tend to greater sameness and greater separation.

I argued in an earlier chapter that all along the line of evolution progress is toward greater difference and closer union until in man we get a passion for conscious and voluntary union with other spirits, and an intellectual thirst for unity in all things ; and that this passion attains its greatest height in persons who attain to the greatest distinction and difference from all other persons, there being much greater difference between men of genius—even if the genius be for sainthood—than there is between children or rustics or the feeble-minded. Conversely, as we descend in the scale of things, we find that the lower the form of life the less complex its difference and the fewer the points of union with its kind. We see the same thing in deviations from the normal that reach the point of degeneracy. Degeneracy in species means loss of function and vitality. The degenerate human individual shows no great difference from his fellow-degenerates, but tends to be self-

centred, odd, and solitary. The moral degenerate ceases to be capable of great desire for conscious union. If devils had such a desire, like Milton's bad angels, they would not be devils at all. We must all hope that it is impossible for human nature ever to degenerate in immortal life beyond recovery, but I have introduced this hypothetical union of devils to illustrate two things : first, that free and conscious spirits must be in union with those of their own class because they emit the same impulses and are sensitive only to the same waves of energy, and I would call attention to the fact that this is the least degree of unity of which humanity is capable ; secondly, that because we cannot conceive in the case of devils of any closer union than this, we find it impossible to conceive of distinctions among them ; by the analogy of all things we know we must believe that devilishness would tend to sameness of nature, and to freak rather than purpose in activity.[1]

To be a Christian in any sense must be to be in union with other Christians, whether the union be conscious and voluntary or not. Elijah, in the Bible story, was certainly united with all the worshippers of Jahweh although he felt himself to be alone ; but this union was not so effective as if it had been conscious, and when it became conscious it was yet only an inner union, not so effective as if outward union had been voluntarily sought.

The common Christian purpose—to make men fit for the reign of God as foretold by Jesus, can

[1] This seems to be the character that Dante represents in his devils, and few have brought so great a power of mind to the subject.

be most effectually carried out only when Christian unity is both conscious and voluntary, inward and outward. Its basis of power is gentleness as opposed to the fighting spirit; its method is personal initiative as opposed to mechanical obedience. If service be spontaneous, and no power, physical or moral, be brought to bear to enforce certain sorts of spontaneity and suppress others, variety and ever greater variety must result. If this be not consonant with the truest and most vital unity which humanity can know then Christianity is divided against itself and cannot stand.

So far in history we have had three epochs in Christendom: the first, of embryonic and unrecognised divergence; the second, of the use of constraint, physical and moral, to suppress divergence; the third, of recognised divergence and lack of conscious and voluntary union. The problem of achieving conscious and voluntary union with adequate scope for variety still lies before the Church.

We have seen that degeneracy tends to sameness and conscious isolation; that the higher the human spirit rises in the scale of being the more it develops personal distinction and closest fellowship. We are therefore bound to suppose that personal distinction and union belong especially to what may be called "the things of God," and if we consider the causes of religious disunion among Christians we shall perhaps find that they chiefly arise from a mistaken conception of what the things of God among us really are.

It is a necessity of human nature to be social.

People naturally group themselves round leaders of thought; the groupings become hereditary; the central thought of the group becomes buttressed by ideas which harmonise with it, and thus a body of opinion grows with the growth of the party or sect. Religious controversy is always concerned with the honour of God. Each side is, in its own estimation, the "host of the Lord," contending for His truth, His person, His government, as for a divine banner.

Mr. Balfour has lately said that religion consists in the belief that God takes sides in the world. We must conceive of God as taking the part of right against wrong, not of man against man; for it is worthy of note that, while all religious differences involve each party believing that God is with them and against their opponents, the unbiased observer, removed from the heat of controversy, can often see a higher right in which both conceptions of right so bitterly fought for have their share.

It is evident that the Kingdom of God, with whose advent Jesus identified His own future, must be the right with which God fully identifies Himself, manifested in our concrete life; and although, while the Kingdom tarries, we can only see this divine ideal less and less dimly, never clearly, the historic life of Jesus must be the germ of the righteousness that will subsume the differences of faithful men. Our knowledge of it must be the searchlight by which we may examine the complexity of things to discover, as nearly as we may, God's side.

Perhaps the most hopeful line of inquiry will be found in the deeper consideration of the contrast our Lord draws between the things of God and the things of men. When Peter was offended at the thought that God should have close connection with disgrace and torture, shame and death, he was contending for God's honour, God's righteousness. Just as the priests and lawyers of the nation rejected Jesus because His claim to be Messiah seemed to them to reflect dishonour upon the living God, so Peter, although more advanced than they, having seen the simplicity of humble life to be the first stage of Messianic dignity, still felt that this forecast of the Cross profaned the God of Israel, in whose eternal purpose Messiah came. The thought that God always suffered in the world in this way had not come to him. We have not lost this idea of Peter's; it dominates us still; we still think we have to defend God's honour according to our low ideas of what is honourable, and we have therefore taken the Cross out of its setting in the whole progress of human effort toward right and truth. While acknowledging it to be a part of God's eternal purpose, we are apt to isolate it from other human events in order to glorify it. We are too much inclined to regard it, on its human side, as a mere miscarriage of human justice, the outcome of a false and dead religion. But, do what we will, we cannot get away from the fact that the religion and the civilisation that turned their swords against the concrete revelation of God in Christ were the purest religion and the best

civilisation the world had yet known, and we are not so far in advance of these now. What could the world show finer in its time than the monotheism of the Jews and the purity of their ideals, personal and social? What could it show more widely humane than the broad administrative principle of the Roman Empire, that the prejudices and passions of a subject people should be humoured on occasion, even at the expense of justice to the individual?

Religion and civilisation at their best were bound to be in opposition to Jesus, because they concentrated themselves on the defence of the good already revealed, already attained. What they feared was a relapse into some worse condition. Jesus impersonated the faith that man and his paltry attainments, lying in the hollow of God's hand, was offered a glorious future in return for a paltry past. What else is repentance but the voluntary yielding of the past in exchange for a God-given future? The repentance that Jesus demanded was religious, political, social, as well as personal. The representatives of religious and civil power behaved like the children of a king who should refuse to lay down some toys already theirs and leave their nursery for richer delights, under the impression that if they did so they would lose all they possessed, while their lives and all they had depended upon the paternal benevolence which they mistrusted.

Peter wanted to see Jesus taking sides with some already existing right, terrorising His enemies, honoured by all who were well disposed.

It is a shallow criticism that assumes that Jesus expected to take the Cross first, and afterwards to take the things of Peter's dream or their equivalents. He affirms an opposition between the things of God and man so violent that man, wallowing in his "things," is called "Satan." He says, in effect, "as the heavens are high above the earth my thoughts are higher than your thoughts." It was certainly not a distinction of mere sequence —one first, the other after. The two conceptions of what it behoved God's representative to do were wholly opposed. Here we touch, as nearly as earth may ever touch, the eternal distinction of right and wrong. It is an opposition that in its depths contains the whole truth about God's relation to man that we can know, and thus subsumes all minor religious oppositions.

Our Lord's proclamation of the Kingdom was the keenest criticism of all current human institutions. By it they were all weighed in the balance and found wanting, and all who were involved in them partook of their imperfections. The taint of evil was over everything ; nothing escaped it ; those who looked forward to the Kingdom were to be always repenting—*i.e.* always making fresh beginnings. This insistence upon repentance, this foretelling that the current world must pass, comprehended all men alike, as St. Paul said, "under sin." But we have hackneyed St. Paul's graphic terms, and can perhaps make it clearer to ourselves if we say that Jesus evidently thought that the world in its badness was a unity ; the taint of evil in it was over everything. "He that hateth

his brother in his heart the same is a murderer." But if the brother is so evil that the comparatively righteous man must hate him, is the hater good? It seems to me that the proclamation of the Kingdom implies that in that case the taint of the brother's sin is over the hater, because the standard that is set up for the Christian penitent is one which condemns both hatred and judgment of the brother. The eternal distinction between right and wrong is, in the tainted environment of the world, only reflected in a relative difference; all effort after righteousness, private and public, is partly bad while it is relatively good, and the only hope lies in exchanging the past for a better, God-given future—in the coming of the perfect reign of God.

What, then, was the side which Jesus represented God as taking in the world? Does He not show God as taking the side of an ideal righteousness just beyond our sight, just out of our reach? Does He not show that as all men fail of that righteousness, God still abides with those who suffer most from His own gift of freedom, the sick and sinful and sorry, and with those who are condemned and outcast from a religious and civilised world itself more deeply condemned, but not outcast, by God, and that God abides most with those who love these?

Jesus is represented as compelling His own crucifixion, submitting to it without resistance as part of the government of the current world. He criticises the Jews as being only relatively more

sinful in their action than the Roman governor, and he prays for His executioners as not knowing the wrong they did. This is the prayer of one who had been long accustomed to make excuses to himself for the perpetrators of the many cruelties that were the frequent wayside sights of the day. No man could love men as Jesus did without seeing the confusion of good and evil in thought, feeling, and circumstance that animated all the men He was accustomed to meet. There can be no doubt of the truth of the old theological doctrine that the Cross was the condemnation of an error and a sin common to humanity. Seeing that the best was bad, it was natural to the human heart of Jesus to take His stand in this world with the most condemned, with the most cruelly punished. What then! does it not behove the criminal, the heretic, to suffer at the hands of society? at the hands of the Church? That is a very large question, one that involves all social science; but one thing the Cross of Christ makes clear—that it behoves God to suffer with all sinners. How else could it be? How could God give freedom and shirk the consequences? What the Cross says in effect, in answer to all our judgments of condemnation, is, "Let him who is without sin among you condemn." But if, being sinful, you must punish, be sure that God is suffering with those you punish. It is He who suffers most under your attempts of good government, even though He nerves your arm to make the attempt—and this ought more especially to modify ecclesiastical contests.

If we approach this Divine attitude in another way its necessity will again be apparent. Take the case of a mother who hears that her little child has injured itself. Her only desire is to have the child in her arms, to nurse it night and day. To be kept away would be agony ; as long as the child suffers her only possible joy is to minister to the sufferer. "Poor joy!" one may say ; but if something held her back the breaking of the barrier would be a fierce delight. Or think of a father whose dear son had brought upon himself disgrace. His chief desire is to identify himself with the lad, to work with him to wipe out the stain. If any circumstance were to withhold him from this, how eagerly would he dash it aside !

If we, being evil, feel this, how much more God ! If God loved the world enough to permit wrong in order to obtain free righteousness, how deep must be His love! With all wrongdoers and with all sufferers He must abide ; it must be His joy to identify himself with the sinful till the sin is lost in its opposite virtue, or, possibly, until the personality disintegrate and consciousness cease. He must hold every sufferer to His breast till the pain is relieved. Mr. Temple's very striking aphorism, "Heaven is the Cross," graphically depicts the intense joy of God in identifying himself with all the conscious grief that His gift of freedom has entailed.

Jesus, whose love for the unfortunate and sinful so impressed His little following that they made the whole wide world in all subsequent ages ring

with it—Jesus had constantly seen many heart-rending sights—disease, cruelty, misery of all sorts, and the tortures of would-be justice—in the Palestine of that day. Society then was not so clever at hiding them as it is now. The respectable and righteous learnt to pass by with averted eyes, probably because they could not otherwise have carried out their ordinary duties. But Jesus would have no share in that sort of respectability. He had no choice but to tear it to shreds. In compelling His own crucifixion He proclaimed in the strongest way that not with the relatively righteous, but with sinners,—not with the victors of religious controversy, but with the victims,—not with the solvent, but with the bankrupt, His sympathy lay. Let our legalism, our dogmatism, make what it will of it, that is the tenor of the gospel, that is the light of the Cross.

If the crucifixion of Jesus represented the age-long effort of man to defend his divine heritage, his place, his nation, or the world-civilisation, against all menace, Jesus, in accepting that crucifixion, stood for the faith that God is guarantor for the future—and belief in a Father-God with power to bring about His Kingdom necessitates this confidence,—then it follows that we must learn from the Cross of Christ that no reverse can come to what is really good, for good is of God, and is upheld by the power that upholds the universe and that is bringing about the reign of God on earth. If, then, there is danger to any particular religion, or state, or civilisation, it is because there is something bad in its very con-

stitution, and hope lies, not in fighting that which menaces, but in radical improvement.

Further, if we believe that God suffers with those we condemn or ostracise or punish, we shall be sure that we must find some other solution to our problems of government. At the expense of our own rights or our own dignity we must find another way of winning them, even as He in Christ has won us. And we may be quite sure that in winning them they will also win us.

To sum up. In the long process of evolution the only side we can suppose God to have taken is that involved in guiding life into higher forms through the normal development of health and strength, beauty and wisdom ; and we note, when humanity is reached, the human heart instinctively feels that God takes the side of the poor and suffering. In exact counterpart of this we find in the manifestation of God's character in our Lord Jesus Christ that His activities were directed towards health and sanity and the supply of the normal needs of healthy life, that the poor and the suffering and the ignorant were His first care : and He adds to what evolution teaches us, to what the instinct of the heart teaches us, that it is with sinners also that God takes sides.

What we need to realise is that while the Kingdom tarries there will always be something that good men think wrong that is right, always something that they think right that is wrong, and that progress for us can only consist in learning more and more perfectly to rely on the Power of Love which is God.

CHAPTER XIX

PAIN AND PUNISHMENT

Assuming a psychic life, latent or developed, in all organic things, capacity for suffering exists only with the development of consciousness, and is proportioned to the degree in which consciousness is developed.

Possibility of physical failure we share with animals and plants; moral and mental failure belong to intelligent life alone.

A failing organism may transmit life, but that life will be in some degree degenerate.

Thus, individual life can proceed to higher and higher forms, or it may diverge and deteriorate—a process fraught with pain.

Such pain is clearly a danger signal. It cannot be regarded as punishment, because it always falls heavily on the innocent.

The suffering of sympathy is the highest type of suffering, and with degeneracy the power to sympathise grows less.

Sympathy, being characteristic of the finest and most sensitive natures, involves the keenest suffering. Hence such suffering cannot be disciplinary. Were it so, we could not believe that God suffers; and did He not suffer He would not be the Christian God.

We thus cannot regard suffering as God's punishment of the evil or His discipline of the good.

We are driven to believe God permits sin, though He does not ordain it; the same seems true of suffering, which is the product of sin.

Conceiving our present existence as but a stage in an immortal progress, we cannot regard it, even as a stage, as perfectly exhibiting the will of God. Rather, all creation, free within its limits, is only learning to conform to God's will, and is not always doing its best to learn.

Hence we conceive of God as neither ordaining sin nor suffering, but as ordaining freedom to do right or wrong; and in thus ordaining He accepts the greatest share of any suffering that may flow from it for the sake of our attaining to free co-operation with His will.

While it is thus impossible to think God ordains punishment, yet punishment exists in the numbing degeneracy that overtakes the misdirected life when it refuses to accept the warning of pain.

Neither from the teaching of our Lord nor from the trend of our experience have we any assurance that all such erring personalities shall ultimately be saved; but our conception of creative purpose makes it necessary to believe that even if the individual mind finally disintegrate, it will be reabsorbed into the created life-force, to rise again through personality to union with God.

As things are, the return to the normal onward path of every erring soul is possible by faith in God's re-creative power.

CHAPTER XIX

PAIN AND PUNISHMENT

I THINK we shall all admit that capacity for suffering—*i.e.* pain of any sort—only exists with the development of consciousness, and only according to the degree in which consciousness is developed. But below the stage of consciousness we see that when there is any deviation from the normal, either in the living thing or in its environment, processes of failure set in, producing either premature death or deformity or disease. An unhealthy tree may be stunted in its youth and deformed by blight and fungi. In conscious life exactly the same thing happens, and produces physical pain. In intelligent life we have two distinct varieties of failure, one of which we call moral and the other mental, as well as the physical which we share with the animals and plants. Where there is failure life may be transmitted, but it is to some degree a degenerate life.

To me it seems that all this points to the fact that there are two directions in which life can travel: the one leads on in the direction of its first impulse, and through higher development to development

again higher ; the other turns from the straight direction, diverging at first very gradually, but diverging more rapidly the farther it goes, until it reaches a point where it is no longer possible to regard the path as leading forward from the starting-point because it is in fact leading backward. The individual life that continues on the diverging path loses its individuality and complexity more and more, and where life is conscious, and above all where it is self-conscious, the resulting moral, mental, and physical degeneracy is fraught with pain. Pain is clearly the danger signal here, the angel standing in the path to warn back life to its normal channel ; and the reason it is impossible to consider pain a punishment is because it falls more heavily upon the innocent, by unconscious assimilation of the taint by inheritance or association, or through his powers of affection and sympathy. It is, I think, the numbing degeneracy itself that we must regard as punishment. But all pain is a by-product of degeneracy, and is an absolute evil though a relative good. But we must emphasise that in all cases the pain associated with degeneracy falls upon the innocent. There is the taint of association, the pain of sympathy, and the pain of injury deliberately inflicted on the innocent.

It would appear that the suffering of sympathy is the highest type of suffering, that which is most consonant with progress, because as degeneracy increases the power to sympathise grows less and less. By " sympathy " I do not here mean horror at the thought of pain, but the fellow-feeling that

is not afraid of the thought of pain, and that goes out as a pure energy of help. We all agree that where this true sympathy is found in animals or in human lives that seem otherwise degraded, appearances are so far fallacious; it is the one attribute that seems to redeem the meanest life, a quality we can almost worship that inheres in natures outwardly very low. On the other hand, when anything reveals the capacity for true sympathy to be lacking in men who appear otherwise superior, we recognise a deep-seated degeneracy.

As sympathy is characteristic of the highest and most sensitive natures, it involves the keenest suffering, suffering being always proportioned to the power of the nature to suffer. It follows that suffering cannot exist for the discipline of the sufferer. If it were so we could not believe that God suffers. If God suffers not, our Lord is no revelation of Him, nor is it possible to conceive the Creator as having the relation of Father to His creation, nor would it be possible for many of us to remain theists, for if the Creator be faithful to His creatures it must be true that in all their afflictions He is afflicted; if He be not faithful He is not the Christian God.

Suffering, then, most acute when least deserved, certainly exists for some other reason than the discipline of the sufferer. The Christian cannot suppose that his little fitful dreams of the pain of sympathy can be more than a mere suggestion to us of what Divine pain must be. If God's is the greatest pain in the universe, it appears

foolish to go on asserting that God ordains pain either for the punishment of the evil or the discipline of the good.

Let us come to the matter from another point of view. Do we believe that God ordains sin? If not, we are bound to admit that He permits what He does not ordain. We cannot retain our moral sense and suppose that God ordains sin; therefore we are driven to think that in the case of sin He permits what He does not ordain; and I do not think in this respect we can differentiate sin and the suffering which is its product. (We speak thus of God permitting what He does not ordain although in abstract thought we cannot justify the distinction.)

In our own world sin and suffering are inextricably mixed. Many physical diseases are the causes of moral obliquity, just as truly as moral obliquity is the cause of physical disease, and the noblest human suffering of which we can conceive being that which is invariably caused by sin in the object of regard, we must conceive this to be the sort of pain that God suffers. His pain is caused by the sin of others; our noblest pain is caused by the sin of others; our minor pains are inextricably mixed up with sin.[1] And this is just as true if for the word "sin" we substitute a name for the same thing that is not religious, and call it "wrong" or "moral defect."

Believing in individual immortality we are compelled to believe that our earthly conditions, whether

[1] I am assuming that if our social life were sinless death would never be painful or premature and loss would have no sting.

good or evil, must be regarded as only a stage in a progress to an eternal joy greater than earth can ever offer. The pledge of this is our power to conceive it, the unquenchable hope of the individual, and the fact of his defect and mortality, all of which, if he be part of a divine purpose, point to a further consummation in an immortal society which even a perfect earth could not satisfy. But I conceive that, though earth be only a stage in a progress, we must, if we hold that it now represents the will of God, be prepared to maintain that it is perfect as a stage. This I do not consider a tenable belief.

Professor James[1] puts the difficulties of the view that "all that is is right" thus:

> Hardly any one can remain *entirely* optimistic after reading the confession of the murderer at Brockton the other day; how, to get rid of the wife whose continued existence bored him, he inveigled her into a desert spot, shot her four times, and then, as she lay on the ground and said to him, "You didn't do it on purpose, did you, dear?" replied, "No, I didn't do it on purpose," as he raised a rock and smashed her skull. Such an occurrence, with the mild sentence and self-satisfaction of the prisoner, is a field for a crop of regrets which one need not take up in detail. . . . The judgment of regret calls the murder bad. Calling a thing bad means, if it mean anything at all, that the thing ought not to be, that something else ought to be in its stead.

But if we must admit anything to exist that is not in accordance with the will of God—if my telling you a lie to-morrow had better be avoided, and still, when to-morrow comes, I being tempted,

[1] *The Will to Believe*, pp. 160-1.

tell it—then there is no further difficulty in holding that all creation is, within its limits, free, and that it is only learning to conform to God's will as you and I are, and that it does not always do its best, and that consequently there is a vast amount yet to be conformed to His will in our terrestrial creation, that, as a stage in a progress to a higher than earthly life, this present world is amiss.

It appears to me necessary, then, if we would believe in God, to believe that He does not ordain suffering any more than He ordains sin. What he ordains is freedom—the freedom to do right, and be physically sound, and live in his own utter joy ; which involves the freedom to do wrong, and to be diseased, and to suffer. And in thus ordaining He is willing to accept the greatest share of the suffering for the sake of the joy set before us in attaining to free co-operation with His will.

Thus it becomes impossible to believe that God regards pain as punishment, or ordains punishment. But punishment exists in the numbing degeneracy that overtakes the life that is not warned by pain to turn back to the normal course. We cannot conceive of a universe in which the parts should behave in any way that was detrimental to the whole without either bringing the whole to a standstill or becoming themselves negligible. If a part in a machine become warped or rough it must be taken out and replaced if the machine is to continue its work ; and in the development of life the degenerate strains must die out or progress would cease. We have seen in the fanciful illustration of a gardener with power to create a certain

form of plant life, that he must at the very outset not only limit it by giving it character, but determine that its failures must prove sterile in order that its various forms of beauty may have a chance to become excellent. If we produce this thought into the sphere of mind or spirit, regarding our personalities as individualised mind, we must suppose that the result of wrongdoing must take the shape of sterility of heart and, possibly, gradual disintegration of the individual.

We may hope that this is impossible to humanity, that salvation shall be all-embracing, but we must admit that neither from the tenor of our Lord's teaching nor from the course of affairs in the world have we any such assurance. But our belief in creative purpose makes it necessary to believe that the final extinction of the individual mind, if it takes place, would be re-absorption into the created life-force to rise again through personality to union with God.

As things are, all mankind on earth, even the most degraded, have an opportunity, by embracing the regenerative sympathy of God, to return to the normal onward path. The return is to be accomplished by faith in God's re-creation, and the result would be the continued integrity of the individual mind, or, as our Lord is represented as saying, the self-possession of the soul. I do not think there exists any human being, however apparently degenerate, to whom this faith could not be imparted by the energy and sympathetic faith of noble souls, if this energy were rightly directed.

CHAPTER XX

SALVATION BY JOY

Christian repentance ought to be a glad thing.

It is no longer possible for us to suppose that God is partial; His whole creation, whether progressive or retrograde, must have His impartial favour.

God's purpose being one, the perfection of the earthly state and the ultimate perfection of humanity in a purely spiritual state must be inter-dependent parts of that purpose.

Hence we need to cultivate both the outward and visible and the inward and spiritual departments of life.

The long process of physical and social evolution points to a future earthly state in which the law of God will be written in the heart of man and of things.

But we cry for something earth can never give, and religious experience brings ever stronger assurance that the joys of earth are but steps to a more intense unearthly joy.

For the regulation of our life we need more explicitly to synthesise the earthly and the spiritual goals.

The teaching of Christianity and of science, truly interpreted, seem to encourage the belief that every step in an ascending progress brings keener consciousness of the inter-dependence of the parts of any whole, and that to live immortally unto God must be to live unto all our fellows and they to us.

The thought that conceptions of material perfection and spiritual perfection are incompatible is directly contradicted by what we know of the fullest spiritual life, which will be found to best adjust the outward and the spiritual in its purpose.

If our Lord affirmed a synthesis of both the earthly and the heavenly hope, never made before, His eschatology must have been ill understood by His hearers. We are yet dazed by its splendour.

Dante saw that a perfect earth must be part of God's scheme.

To sum up:

(*a*) The Christian doctrine that Jesus must needs, by reason of His union with God, accept what befell Him in fulfilling His mission, and require His followers to make the same sacrifice, reflects the thesis that the Creator is in part "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" in His creation.

(*b*) The Christian aspiration, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," reflects the belief that God designs a free earthly creation to become, in co-operation with Him, "good."

(*c*) Our belief that mankind is one, making it man's duty to work for humanity present and future, involves the conviction that the earthly perfection of the race is part of every man's own salvation.

Faith, hope, charity receive an enduring stimulus in the belief that the very image, the very life, of God is latent in all things, and is being evoked from all things.

Because the Christian revelation shows God as opposed to all pain and wrong, and shows Him as suffering in all pain and wrong, the world is saved by the joyful realisation that God Himself is its Saviour.

Christian repentance is the turning from all thought that in God is any darkness at all.

CHAPTER XX

SALVATION BY JOY

CHRISTIAN repentance ought to be a glad thing. The command to it is coupled with the proclamation that the Kingdom of God is at hand. It is the turning from the beggarly elements of our dead selves and the expectation of novel gifts from God. The true penitent turns from bad dreams of a hard God to the Divine Love whose gentleness shall make him great. The true penitent turns, in every department of life, from the abnormal to the normal, and exchanges the garment of heaviness for the spirit of praise.

So far I have been urging that if we believe that the Christian's God created the universe and manifested himself in Christ, we are bound to infer His universal favour for all His creatures. It is no longer possible for us to suppose that God is partial, that any part of His creation can be excluded from His favour. It would appear that creation can be progressive or retrograde; any portion of it can please God more and more, or can grieve Him more and more perhaps till the term of particular life is reached, and the particular

degenerate dissolved into the universal; but we cannot conceive of God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, offering less than His utmost aid to His whole creation at all times. And we cannot conceive of God as beginning to build the tower of humanity without counting the cost, as being baffled in His intent. We must therefore conclude that the race on earth moves forward to an ideal polity in which, by the co-operation of man and nature or God, not only human nature but instinctive life, and all forms of use and beauty, will come to fuller perfection, and the mechanical forces of nature be under human control. Our knowledge that all things depend on one another suggests that the whole human family in immortal life and on earth must be dependent on the welfare of all its parts, that therefore the relatively small, finite consummation of the race on earth must be an essential part of its spiritual progress.

We need to make sure of this thought. The ultimate perfection of the earthly state and the ultimate perfection of humanity in a purely spiritual state are two perfectly different conceptions; but, assuming a divine purpose, both these perfections must be goals towards which it works, both must be included in the one purpose and be inter-independent.

Our tendency so far has been to minimise one or the other interest in life, either the cultivation of the outward and visible or the inward and spiritual. It is both in their fulness that we want. I cannot see that this can be questioned when we face the facts of our life clearly, and contemplate

our religious belief in the divine ordering of the universe.

We cannot believe that all the long process of man's biological evolution can point to anything less than the physical excellence of our race ; the cry of sentient physical creation in long travail comes to our ears telling us that it is not for nothing that God in sympathy with every creature has suffered thus. The preparation of the physical body, the preparation of the social body or state, has been going on for many millenniums and is not yet consummated. In that future earthly Kingdom of God we may suppose that the forces of what we call inanimate nature will be for the first time understood and brought under perfect control, and that the government will be theocratic, and also democratic, for all that we call the law of nature and of God will be written in the heart of men and of things.

Again, we cannot face the facts of reality within the self, and the growing and developing religious experience of humanity, without being convinced that even if — an impossible thought — all men could arise from the dead and participate in the final earthly consummation, the self could not therein be satisfied. Even in our present half-developed condition we cry as children for something that earth can never give, and the experience of the religious life brings stronger and stronger assurance that the joys of earth are but steps to more intense unearthly joy. Without doubt these yearnings, these assurances, come to us on the physical and psychical sides by direct inheritance ;

they may be the development of what in earlier stages were impulses of mere ambition or adventure, but this does not make them one whit less trustworthy as pointers if we admit the hypothesis of divine purpose.

We need a more explicit doctrine as to the synthesis of the spiritual and the physical excellence of the race, the synthesis of all that humanity may attain to in the highest heaven and all that it may attain to in an earthly state. If God's purpose aims at both these they must each of them be contingent on the other ; humanity cannot reach perfection in a spiritual realm without having reached the earthly perfection, nor can humanity reach its earthly perfection without moving along those lines which lead to the spiritual consummation. A religious society that does not perceive the necessity for this synthesis presents somewhat the appearance of a disturbed ant-hill ; for instead of each individual in the community going on with activities which contribute to the welfare of the whole, the energies of many a member of the community are distracted by not knowing whether flight from the home of the community or the immediate reparation of the home is the better course to pursue. Thus it is possible to see a modern saint running on a pilgrimage for some time with the intention of separating himself from material interests, and then, feeling that he is on the wrong track, running to immerse himself again in the material interests of the community so deeply that he loses the full impulse of the extra-physical motive.

Can the most determined Protestant amongst us imagine that, wherever and whatever the after-life may be, any dogma of science or religion asserts that we shall be oblivious of God's constant work of reconciling this world to Himself? If not oblivious, shall we be indifferent or inactive? I think rather, that all the intimations of a true mysticism, all the indications of Christianity truly interpreted, all the indications of sound science, point to the belief that every ascending degree of progress brings with it a keener consciousness of the inter-dependence of the parts of any whole, and that we cannot in any immortal condition live unto God without living unto all our fellows. In some way not only the thing that we might have been and were not, but the conditions that we might have had and had not, must be realised in others before we can go forward untrammelled.

It has, I think, been shown again and again in the world's history that the power to think of abstract spirit is not by any means the channel of the highest spiritual life, although those who possess this power are apt to speak of material conceptions of perfection as gross and unspiritual. I think it will be found that the fullest spiritual life has always flowed through those conceptions of present and future life which were the best adjustment of the inner and spiritual to the outward and visible aspect of life. For example, the doctrine of progress through repeated re-incarnations carried with it a higher sense of moral responsibility and human unity than the doctrine of man in a static immortality as a bodiless shade.

But the doctrine of the Christian resurrection, involving not so much any theory about dead bodies, as the idea of the immortal man saved from disorganising vicissitudes and living on, more fully developed, still at home with himself and with his accustomed human society, seems to have brought in a fuller sense of human responsibility and brotherhood. This is why the synthesis of an earthly future and a spiritual future seems very wholesome.

Our hypothesis concerning the purpose of God is that creation must be brought to excellence upon its own lines. If this world, for example, be related to God as a poem is related to the poet, must it not be brought to excellence before the Poet has done with it? If it is related to God as a state to a statesman, must it not be perfect before He has done with it? If it be related to God as a convert to a missionary, must He not still "travail in birth till Christ be formed" in it. We ill understand the Christ of God if we do not realise that His energy flowed into the affirmation of God's terrestrial purpose.

It seems probable that our Lord's eschatology was not understood by His hearers. The confused forms of their reports suggest this. If He affirmed both the earthly and the further immortal consummation, the synthesis would be more foreign to the imaginations of the Evangelists than to ours. An eschatology which involved a synthesis of the earthly and heavenly hope never made before, which involved a denial of both as popularly conceived, must have been

difficult indeed to grasp ; we cannot be surprised if His followers were dazed and confused. We are yet dazed by its splendour, and we can only begin to understand it by recognising fully that the ethic that He taught was the one rule by which one society can conquer all other societies and become universal and permanent, the only rule by which fulness of life proceeds to fuller and deeper development in the only world we know.

Dante's poetic insight saw clearly the need for a perfect earth as part of God's scheme when he pictured the purified soul, having ascended the mount of Purgatory, pausing to realise earthly perfection in the earthly Paradise before it could enter the first sphere of heaven. Where his insight failed was in making the soul's purification express itself in negations. A negation is never splendid unless it is the mere by-product of a greater affirmation. The soul is purged by the exercise of positive benevolent activities, as poisons in the veins are best expelled, not by fasting, but by the exercise that oxygenates the blood.

To sum up. The thesis that the Creator in His creation is in part "despised and rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," corresponds with the great Christian doctrine that it was by the compulsion of His inward union with God that Jesus accepted all that befell Him on account of His mission, and called upon His followers to make the same sacrifice. The belief that by God's method a free creation is in process of being perfected in its own course, and that earth shall be made, by the co-operation of man, an earth

which God can call "good," corresponds with the great Christian aspiration, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." The belief that humanity is one, that (as Dr. Westcott puts it) man has been broken into bits to form mankind—this belief, making it man's duty to work, not only for present but for future generations, involves the conviction that the terrestrial perfection of the race is to be part of every man's own salvation.

From this point of view hope, faith, and charity receive a great and enduring stimulus, and the world of thought and religious imagination opens up before the pilgrim soul in splendid, ever-widening vistas earthward and heavenward. We look forward to apprehending that for which we are apprehended—the knowledge that law and freedom can be one in abstract thought as they are one in the concrete life of the Ideal Man. If we realise that we live and move and have our being in a reign of law, that what we call law is indeed only the garment of universal freedom, that we go forward to the conscious and voluntary participation in that working of law which we call the reign of God, the whole universe of body and mind becomes to us illumined with joy because illumined with God. We understand the mind of the Hebrew poet when he said, "Thou hast shut me in behind and before. . . . Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. . . . Whither shall I go from thy spirit? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; and if I make Sheol my couch, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the dawn, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there would thy

hand lead me. . . . How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how vast are the sums of them!" (Ps. cxxxix.)

It is just because the Christian revelation shows us God as opposed to all pain and wrong, shows us God as suffering in all the wrong of creation, shows us that Divine suffering as efficacious for the righting of all wrong, that we must regard joy as the means of the Christian salvation. The world is saved by joyful realisation that God has taken all our wrong and pain upon Himself, and is Himself its certain remedy. How joyful is the certainty that in so far as any of God's creatures, in sympathy or by suffering violence, freely take upon themselves the wrong and pain of others, their suffering, as one with His, has saving efficacy! How joyful is the assurance that no other suffering than that which God endures ought the faithful to endure! Health for the body, health for the mind, rest at heart from all worldly care, fulness of life, with participation in all simple joys, strength to fulfil every duty, power to save the world—these are the gifts which the faith of Jesus Christ discovered to be the results of faith in God. To the degree that this Christ is formed by faith in the human heart these gifts are appropriated. It is only by their full appropriation that God in Christ can be made fully manifest to the world.

Christian faith uses the thought of God like a flashing sword, strikes it right through the close, murky clouds of doubt that encase our earth; through the light-fringed rent come the life-

giving winds of God and beams of joy that destroy our myriad germs of death. In the Christian salvation the word "God" shall increasingly become to humanity the synonym for all joy. Health, genius, beauty, and love shall well up in each heart at the blessed Name, and all men shall instinctively turn to high emprise.

In our appropriation of Christ, by His faith welling up in us, we shall learn ever more clearly that as the shadow of a lark is to the flood of light in which it rises singing toward the sun, so is the sum of pain in creation, and God's suffering for creation, in comparison with the joy of a free, regenerate creation united to the joy of God.

THE END

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